

Birla Central Library

PILANI (Jaipur State)

Class No :- 327.42

Book No :- H 684 A

Accession No :- 19258

AMBASSADOR
ON SPECIAL MISSION

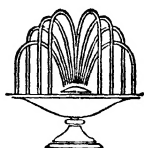
AMBASSADOR ON SPECIAL MISSION

by the

RT. HON. SIR SAMUEL HOARE

D. C. L., LL. D., D. Litt.

Viscount Templewood



COLLINS

ST. JAMES'S PLACE LONDON

1946

MY WIFE

The faithful companion who has shared with me every activity of my public life and without whose help and sympathy no chapter of it could ever have succeeded.

COPYRIGHT
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
COLLINS CLEAR-TYPE PRESS : LONDON AND GLASGOW
1946

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	7
INTRODUCTION	9
<i>Part One</i> 1940-41 FRANCO'S PRE-BELLIGERENCY	21
<i>Part Two</i> 1941-42 FRANCO'S HESITATIONS	102
<i>Part Three</i> 1943 FRANCO'S NON-BELLIGERENCY	184
<i>Part Four</i> 1944 FRANCO'S UNNEUTRAL NEUTRALITY	249
APPENDIX A	300
APPENDIX B	307
INDEX	317

P R E F A C E

THIS BOOK is principally based on the letters that I wrote and the daily notes that I kept during my Spanish mission. Since then, subsequent disclosures have thrown new light on the obscure questions that troubled me in Madrid. So far as I have been able to judge, the correspondence between Franco, Hitler and Mussolini that has recently been published and the memoranda produced at the Nuremberg trial support the general conclusions that I reached at the time as the result of my day to day experiences. In any case, I have not attempted to alter or amplify my impressions by later knowledge. They stand as they were, the record of nearly five years of the changes and chances of war at a strategic point in Europe.

Many helped me to follow what was happening. Particularly, the whole staff of the British Mission in Spain, for without their wise and tireless support, there would have been no record to tell. Most of all, Mr. Bernard Malley whose love of Spain is only equalled by the knowledge that he possesses of its life and history, and the affection in which he is held by his numberless Spanish friends.

In the words of Horace Walpole, "I am no historian. I write casual memoirs. I draw characters. I preserve anecdotes."

TEMPLEWOOD.

March, 1946.

INTRODUCTION

MONTESQUIEU in his *Cahiers* has left a delightful conversation piece of himself.

With the fineness of touch that made him one of Europe's greatest writers he draws himself in detail, and leaves an engaging picture of a very human and sensitive man keenly interested in the world around him and in his own attitude towards it. He himself called his attempt at self-portraiture a folly—" *Je vais faire une assez sottie chose*"—to quote his words—" *c'est mon portrait. Je me connais assez bien.*"

I am guilty of a much greater folly. For although I am altogether insignificant as compared with the author of the *Esprit des Lois*, I intend to follow his example and, as this is the first of several volumes of my memoirs, to begin it with a conversation piece of myself seated in a family group amidst the evidences of my past life.

First of all, it is worth glancing at the background of the picture. It is very English, very respectable, and very traditional. There is good reason for its being very English. According to the experts in the College of Arms there are few families with a longer all-English descent than the Hoares. The appearance of solid respectability is no doubt due to the fact that the Hoares are also the oldest banking family in the City of London. Since the time when they were Oliver Cromwell's bankers until sixty years ago when my father left banking for politics, its successive generations carried on the family business from father to son and with the same regular routine. This long association with an assured and reputable profession accounts for the well-established appearance of the scene and the traditional character of the details. Its effect is no doubt strengthened by the similarity of type to be found in each generation of the family and the continuity of interest in humanitarian movements that has persisted unbroken from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the Hoares were leading Quakers and Evangelicals.

Passing to the foreground of the picture, there appears a slight and not very impressive figure of a man of uncertain age. Evidently, the portrait of someone who is alert both in body and mind. This is to be expected. For he inherited an aptitude for

both games and examinations that showed itself at Harrow and Oxford.

Evidently also, of someone who is very sensitive, perhaps over sensitive to his environment. How true! One of his most persistent failings has been the habit of retiring into his shell in unsympathetic atmospheres and leaving his opponents to their own devices. This sensibility has had another bad effect. It has often made him tire of an enterprise before it was fully completed. With him, as with the Spaniards, it has been the journey and not the inn at the end of it that has mattered. At the same time this sensibility has had its good side. It has enabled him to undertake all sorts of work and to penetrate into many walks of public life. Thirty-four years in the House of Commons, four times Air Minister, First Lord of the Admiralty, Secretary of State for India, Foreign, and Home Affairs and Lord Privy Seal in the War Cabinet—these were the varied ministerial posts through which he passed before the journey to Madrid. And by the way were branch roads that took him to the army during the Great War and to missions in Russia, Italy and the Balkans.

Lastly, the central figure looks both unexciting and unexcitable. It is clearly someone of quiet and conventional habits, who hates extremes and, true to the tradition of all bankers who never go to law, prefers to agree with his adversary whilst he is in the way with him. It is this cautious and unaggressive mentality that has often handicapped him as a party politician. A liberal amongst conservatives and a conservative amongst liberals, he has never been able to judge questions exclusively by their party colour. Nor has he ever entered willingly into party battles. His dozen election fights he cordially detested. In the House of Commons it was the Committee discussions and not the heated scenes of partisan fury in which he felt at home. In the Departments over which he presided, it was the day to day administration that chiefly interested him. In all these activities he was anxious to see quick and concrete results, and to achieve even a part of his objective he was usually ready to accept a compromise. This very English habit of compromise has sometimes landed him in trouble, and it may be that excessive sensibility has exaggerated the dangers of more resolute action.

This description is something more than a study of morbid or conceited introspection. It is an essential sketch of the background from which I went to Spain in 1940. It suggests the

influences that acted upon my work and character, and provides a clue for the successes and failures that were inevitably to emerge from so long a period of public life.

As for the successes, if there be any, I leave them to others to describe. Of the failures, the principal causes were over-concentration upon a limited objective and impatience to turn to new interests and fresh experiences before the objective was fully achieved. These faults will appear most conspicuously in the earlier chapters of my memoirs.

If they are not so evident in this account of my Spanish mission, it is because I did my best to apply the hard lessons of forty years of public life in England to a work of peculiar delicacy and importance on the continent. If the great man, Gibbon, discovered that "the captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers had not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire," a much smaller person, the author of this volume, found by a sort of reverse process from the greater to what seemed to be the less, that the many-sided experience of political posts in England was invaluable for dealing with the strange situations and heterogeneous personalities that confronted him during his diplomatic mission to Spain.

It will be evident from these reflections about myself that I was destined in the normal course of events for an uneventful life of respectable routine and undramatic success. By a strange vagary of fortune, the placid waters of my personal history were continuously disturbed by storms and commotions. Each of the many crises that stirred British politics in the years between the wars deeply involved me in its course. Foreign drama and even foreign melodrama from time to time interrupted the even flow of my life. As chief of our Secret Service in Russia I had, for instance, crossed Rasputin's path in the early years of the last war, whilst in its later years I was the first British official to deal with Mussolini and persuade him to support the Allies after the Italian collapse of Caporetto. It was perhaps a fitting sequel to these incidents that in May of 1940 I was entrusted with a very urgent mission to the strange country of Spain.

For nine months I had been a member of the British War Cabinet, first as Lord Privy Seal, when behind the façade of an ancient office and a historic title I had carried out a maid-of-all-works job for the Prime Minister, and finally as Secretary of State for Air, where at the beginning of April I succeeded Sir

Kingsley Wood and returned to the office where I had started my ministerial career.

Throughout this time, my colleagues and I had worked incessantly in the curious twilight that overlay the first year of the war. The time has not arrived for a detailed description of the part that I took in it. It is sufficient to say that I was constantly aware of two facts, the first, that the period of immunity from serious German attack was altogether artificial and temporary ; the second, that a British Government in office at the beginning of a war is most unlikely to remain in power for any length of time. The events therefore of April and May, 1940, came to me with no shock of surprise. First, the news given me at 5 a.m. on the morning of April 9, by Air Marshal Sir Cyril Newall, the Chief of the Air Staff, that the Germans had entered Denmark and Norway. Next, the story of our landing in Norway, given me early another morning by Mr. Churchill. Then, our painful withdrawal due to lack of air power. And, lastly, the cracking of the French front and the inevitable fall of the Chamberlain government on May 10.

Although these events had for some time cast their shadows in advance, I will not say that I was not greatly moved when they actually came upon me.

It is always a wrench for a minister to leave office. The work, upon which he has been incessantly engaged, comes to an abrupt end. The staff, with whom he has formed so many contacts and friendships, passes from his allegiance. The many facilities for his work, typing, messengers, comfortable travel, and the rest, suddenly cease. His days and nights are left without the central and absorbing interest of his departmental and Cabinet work. Worst of all, he feels the lack of that constant flow of confidential information that, although it may not be disclosed, gives him a solid background for his judgment and a steady basis for his conduct.

This sensation of loss and emptiness I had experienced whenever my periods of office had come to an end. I felt it very poignantly at the end of nine years of almost continuous effort between 1931 and 1940 in the principal offices of state. It was with a wry face, therefore, that I looked at the dismantling of my official telephones, and saw the street outside my house empty of my official car and my faithful detective. My red boxes departed to be shorn of their official locks, and my official keys went back to the Cabinet offices for my successor. These are not

the petty regrets of a place hunter who clings to what the ignorant call "the sweets of office." They are the feelings, both commendable and intelligible, of any man who throws himself body and soul into his work and takes pride in the opportunity that has been given him to serve his country and make a public career.

On May 10 Mr. Chamberlain resigned and Mr. Churchill succeeded him. The country demanded new men. As I was accounted one of Mr. Chamberlain's more intimate colleagues, I had neither the expectation nor the wish to join the new ministry. Nor that I did not fully support Mr. Churchill as a war leader at this dark moment in the nation's life, but rather that, as the military operations had gone badly in Norway and France, a more fully national government was needed to carry on the war and regain the country's confidence.

I consequently found myself unemployed at the very moment of my life when I was most anxious to play a part in the conduct of great events. For the next few days I wandered disconsolately from my house to the Carlton Club and from the Carlton Club to the House of Commons, not knowing where to lay my head and wondering how I should occupy my time and energies. At moments such as this, a man is useless to himself and tiresome to his friends. He wants advice and there is little advice to give him except to be patient. Moreover, his friends have their own work to do, especially in war time, and an ex-minister out of work may well be a nuisance to them and the world.

Happily for me, one of my oldest political friends, Lord Beaverbrook, was very patient with me, and for the next few weeks made use of my help in his new post of Minister of Aircraft Production. Having just left the Air Ministry, I was able to give him useful information about my old department.

Stornoway House, his mid-Victorian palace, had suddenly become the hub of the aircraft industry. There sat this remarkable man carrying on at one and the same time half a dozen separate conversations, and two or three telephone calls to every part of the country and the United States of America. To my regular Whitehall mind it all seemed chaos. Yet, I soon realised that these unconventional methods were essential if we were to survive the attacks of the next weeks. Playing the old rules of Whitehall cabinets and departments, I could never have broken down the obstacles that were hindering a much greater and quicker production of aircraft. Lord Beaverbrook, ignoring every convention, and breaking every rule, smashed ahead,

leaving, it is true, behind him many hedgehog centres of hostile opposition, but helping materially to win the Battle of Britain by a wise disposal and dispersal of machines, by organising an effective system of repair and by sensationally increasing our strength of Spitfires and Hurricanes in spite of the formidable wastage of machines in August and September. No other man could have achieved these results in so short a time. I am glad indeed to have seen the beginning of his work, and I was glad again after my return from Spain to hear Air Marshal Dowding, the Commander-in-Chief of the Fighter Squadrons in the Battle of Britain, declare that he could neither have won, nor held the victory, without the dynamic help of this mercurial genius.

My ship, however, could not stay long in these lively waters. An ex-Secretary of State for Air, whilst he had his uses in the early days of the new Department of Aircraft Production, would have been an encumbrance to the minister when once the Ministry was fully organised. Although therefore Lord Beaverbrook asked me to stay with him, I did not feel it wise or right to accept the invitation.

It was at this moment that Lord Halifax asked me to undertake a special mission to the Iberian Peninsula. "Will you," he said, "go as one of the Duke of Kent's mission to take part in the tercentenary celebrations of Portuguese independence in Lisbon, and subsequently to Madrid to do there what you can to improve our relations with Spain and in particular to set in motion the economic arrangements provided by the Anglo-Spanish Treaty of March 19?" "When," I answered, "do you wish me to go and how long do you think that the mission will last?" His reply was, "You must go at once. The course of the war has made the Iberian Peninsula more than ever important to us. The mission should not take more than a few weeks."

I told him that as the proposal took me by surprise I must think it over before giving him an answer. He agreed, and I at once sought the advice of a few of my intimate friends—I will only mention two of these consultations. The first was with Neville Chamberlain with whom I had worked continuously for twenty years. I had not seen him for some days as he had been overwhelmed with the details connected with the change of government. Like other prime ministers before him, he had left Downing Street for the office of Lord President of the Council in Whitehall. For an ex-prime minister retiring like Lord Balfour to the dignified leisure of an elder statesman, the office of Lord

President, the fifth highest post in the land in order of precedence, with its eighteenth century appurtenances, mahogany furniture, Georgian silver and spacious outlook on Horse Guards Parade, provides a fine setting for a political sunset. But for Chamberlain there was no such dignified peace. Never had a retiring prime minister faced so fierce a storm. One of these days the full story of his political life will be told with the impartiality of history, and when that time comes, there will be few who will not recognise the singleness of purpose with which he served the country and the value of the time that he gained for strengthening the national defences.

When I saw him for the last time, he was a very sick man. His inherited gout, against which he had courageously struggled for many years, held him in its grip. The calamities of the war and the political upheaval were a burden that even the strongest man could scarcely bear. What wonder, then, that he had for me no encouraging advice? This was the substance of our talk: "I doubt whether it is worth your accepting this mission. You may never get to Spain, and if you do, you may never get away. The French army is in hopeless rout, our own army is already being evacuated from France and is leaving behind most of its equipment. Go to Spain if you wish, but do not expect that in the midst of these defeats your mission can be successful."

I came away discouraged. But his words had done me good. They had more than ever impressed on me the gravity of the danger that threatened the British people.

The other talk that I chiefly remember was with Admiral Tom Phillips, the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, whose subsequent death in the disaster of the *Prince of Wales* ended so tragically the life of a very brilliant officer. He and I were old friends from Admiralty days when as a member of a very distinguished Board he helped Lord Chatfield and me to re-start a broad programme of naval construction, and to adapt the training and disposition of the fleet to the changing circumstances of the world. Knowing from experience the wide scope of his mind and on that account wishing to have his opinion on the proposed mission, I put to him the same question that I had asked Chamberlain. "Shall I go to Spain?" His answer had all the confident assurance of a naval officer. "You must go at once. It is essential that the Atlantic ports of the Spanish Peninsula should not fall into enemy hands. With the probable loss of France and the French fleet we are stretched to the utmost in our

battle with the U-boats. If the Atlantic ports of the Peninsula and with them the coast of north-west Africa go over to the enemy, I do not know how we shall carry on. It is essential also that the naval base of Gibraltar should remain available for our Mediterranean and eastern communications. If you can do anything in support of these fundamental needs of the war, your mission will be of the highest strategic importance."

Admiral Phillips' words convinced me. They threw a different light upon the proposal, and dispelled from my mind any idea that I had as to its value. The mission was not a pretext for breaking the fall of an ex-minister, or for finding a job for an old friend. It was not a mere diplomatic post. It was real and urgent war work of great strategic importance in which the chiefs of staff and the fighting services were deeply concerned.

When I fully realised the position, there was no doubt as to accepting the offer. It only remained to settle the details. Where should I go? How should I make the journey? For how long a stay should I make my preparations? In asking these questions I made it clear that I was speaking in the first person plural. It was inconceivable that I should go without my wife, who had been with me in Russia and Italy and stood by my side through many political battles. Upon this point there was no difference of opinion. It was everywhere agreed that she would once again be invaluable to my work, and that it was essential for her to go with me.

As to when and how we should go, the answer was "at once" and "by air." And as to "how long," the general view was six weeks to three months. The further, however, that we went with the details, the more clearly it became evident that if I was to have any influence with the Franco government, I must have the full status of an Ambassador. The idea was therefore dropped under which it had been originally proposed that I should make a short and almost casual visit to Madrid as a sequel to the Portuguese mission. Instead, I was to proceed direct to Spain with the full status of Ambassador Extraordinary on Special Mission after obtaining the formal agreement of the Spanish Government.

This plan of campaign plunged us for the next few days into a turmoil of hectic preparations. Many of our possessions had been stored when we lent our London house in Cadogan Square to the Red Cross. Our private affairs needed urgent adjustment after many years of ministerial office. A journey that was easy

enough to arrange in normal times created problems that were almost insoluble in the confusion of May, 1940. By way of an additional complication we discovered that as my predecessor needed his own possessions, most of the necessities of life were lacking in the Madrid Embassy. How we should have coped at the last minute with this unexpected problem I cannot imagine, if we had not found in Sir Patrick Duff, the Secretary of the Office of Works, an indispensable friend in time of trouble. For most of the Sunday before our departure he and his faithful assistants scoured London for china, cutlery and linen, and by a feat that almost amounted to wizardry, found it and within a couple of days had it shipped to a Spanish port.

How badly organised, in respect, thought he and I, was a Foreign Service establishment, not, like the Indian Civil Service, provide its headquarters with fully-appointed houses and running establishments for their missions. Was it a survival of the spacious days when the head of a mission ran an Embassy like a great country house, with his personal friends for secretaries, a crowd of English servants and a wealth of family plate, china and pictures that came and went in his august train? Perhaps it was not inappropriate that when the constitutional question was raised as to whether or not I vacated my Parliamentary seat of Chelsea by accepting the Madrid mission, it was decided by the Law Officers of the Crown that an embassy was not an office of profit within the meaning of the Act of Settlement, and that an ambassador was so vague a personage that he could not be classed as a place-man. Whilst therefore I became an Excellency, I remained an M.P. I was in good company. Canning had retained his seat when, as a result of political changes in London in 1812, he became ambassador in Lisbon.

The Spanish Government is notoriously indifferent to time. Such formalities as agreements to diplomatic appointments have been known to take many weeks and months. In my case, the agreement arrived with almost embarrassing speed. Perhaps the Spanish Government was flattered at the appointment of a former Foreign Secretary. Perhaps also, General Franco was ready to welcome an Ambassador who, whilst never taking sides in the civil war, had supported non-intervention, and been always convinced that the forces of the left were too bitterly divided amongst themselves for any chance of ultimate victory.

The few days left to me were more than fully occupied with farewell talks. The new Prime Minister, already in the plenitude

of his power, wished me well. I found him already installed in the Cabinet room in Downing Street at the long table where I had so often seen Bonar Law, Baldwin and Chamberlain. I could never myself have worked in a room almost completely monopolised by the long table and provided with none of the amenities of a *cabinet de travail*. Yet every Prime Minister whom I knew, with the exception of Ramsay MacDonald, used it as his study.

The Duke of Alba, a friend of many years, spared no pains to facilitate our journey, and to recommend us to his friends in Madrid. Finally, at the busiest moment of our packing, a party of Spanish journalists descended upon me in quest of an interview. I acceded to their demand and for some time descanted, as I thought with both eloquence and discretion, upon themes that I believed to be of interest to the Spanish people. It came as a surprise to me that nothing subsequently appeared in the Spanish press. If I had then known more of the German control of Spanish papers, and the Falange machinery of censorship, I should not have wondered at this suppression of British news. If I had also known that one of my interviewers was, as subsequent events proved, a German spy, I should have saved myself the trouble of a fruitless talk.

My appointment was formally announced on May 24. By May 29, we were in the aeroplane en route for Madrid via Lisbon.

Once again my wife and I were making a pioneer flight. We had been the first civilians to fly to India. The only pioneer flight that I had made without her, was to Central Africa, when I was organising the first air service across the African continent. And now in the full circle of events we were to make the first civil transport flight from London to Madrid and, although we did not know it at the time, the last civil flight to land in France for four years.

Although the Germans had already taken Ostend and Lille and were moving like a flood over France, and the evacuation of Dunkirk was in full swing, the Bordeaux aerodrome was nominally still in use. When, however, we landed to refuel, we found a depressing scene of solitude and inaction. A few derelict and obsolete machines lay round the hangars. Our arrival created little interest amongst the handful of employees who were still on the aerodrome, and it was with a feeling of foreboding that having lunched, we quitted France, already partly occupied by the Germans, for Spain, likely to be fully occupied in a few days or weeks.

Our anxieties were not lessened when we reached Lisbon. My old friend of Oxford and Foreign Office days, Walford Selby, had nothing but bad news to tell us. Outwardly, the city was at its best. A brilliant sun, the vivid colours of the jacarandas and the many exotic trees and shrubs, the radiant façades of the baroque churches and palaces, the silver setting of one of the world's noblest rivers combined to make a superb prospect of external beauty. But never were fears and anxieties graver in the background. "The Germans will have occupied all France in a week. It will only take them another fortnight to occupy the Spanish Peninsula. General Franco will welcome them into Spain, and once in Spain, it will only be a matter of hours before they are in Lisbon." This was the talk of the whole town. It was more than talk. It was conviction. Worse still, it seemed to be supported by the telegrams from London. "Await further instructions before proceeding to Madrid"—this was their tenor. My mission looked like ending with a return flight to London. I waited, therefore, anxious and depressed, sitting for the most part in the luxuriant garden of the Embassy or listening to the recurring bad news on the radio. When my further instructions arrived, they were to the effect that we were to proceed to Madrid but to keep the British Airways machine for use in the event, that was by no means unlikely, of our having to return immediately to England.

It was amidst these uncertainties that we left Lisbon on June 1, in time to arrive in Madrid about three in the afternoon.

Flying over the whole breadth of Portugal and the western half of Spain we noted for the first time the striking contrast between the two countries. On the one hand, Portugal, verdant and varied, the houses newly whitewashed or brightly painted, the gardens full of flowers. Altogether, in spite of the poverty of the people, a smiling landscape. On the other hand, the Spain of Estremadura and Castile, a country that recalled the many deserts over which we had both flown in Africa and Asia, a uniform brown and grey, scarcely a tree, no gardens, long stretches of what seemed to be untilled land, jagged mountains, and few if any signs of habitation between the scattered villages and townships. It was our first experience of the differences between the two countries. Thereafter I was to have many examples of the incompatibility of outlook and temperament of these two historic neighbours.

Part I

1940-41 FRANCO'S PRE-BELLIGERENCY

"Spain, yea Spain, it is Spain which all causes do concur to give a just alarm."

SIR WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURGHEY.
(Discourse of Matters of Religion and State
to Her Most Gracious Sovereign. 1583.)

CHAPTER ONE

IT WAS at the hottest moment of the day that we landed at Barajas, the Madrid aerodrome. A series of bumps over the very rough and hard ground, and we were shaking hands with the assistant chief of the Spanish Protocol, and the Embassy staff. Foremost amongst those to welcome us was Arthur Yencken, the Counsellor, an outstanding young diplomat who for four years was to be my close friend and indispensable adviser. I shall have more to say in subsequent pages of his invaluable help and the tragedy that cut short his career. As it was, on that first of June, I was glad to be welcomed by a former partner with whom I had often played lawn tennis in the past and of whose official work I had heard such glowing accounts from his diplomatic colleagues.

As we drove away together, I was told of the incidents connected with my arrival. Throughout the morning crowds had been patrolling the streets of Madrid in the neighbourhood of the Embassy, and shouting the parrot cry that I was often to hear in the next two years, "Gibraltar Español"—"Gibraltar for Spain." Not for the first or last time, however, the Falange plans went amiss. The hotheads had heard that we were to arrive in the morning, and had consequently arranged for the mob to greet me at the Embassy. As we did not land until the middle of the afternoon, the demonstration ended in hot air. Probably also in hot sleep, as it was the sacred hour of the Spanish siesta. We laughed it all off, and when I was asked whether I needed a larger police guard, I caused some amusement by saying, "No

more police, please, but fewer silly young men." If I had then known more of the Spanish police under Falange and German domination, I should have realised that there was more wisdom in my answer than I imagined at the time.

In any case, the incident made me think. It was my first experience of Falange hostility. It showed me also that the question of Gibraltar was still highly inflammable.

As the Embassy was either partially dismantled or largely occupied by the Chancery, we started life in the Ritz. The Madrid Ritz, though it looked like the other members of its family, had at that time its distinctive peculiarities. It was, for instance, filled with very aggressive Germans. Gestapo agents listened to our conversations and hung around us at every turn. Our telephone was regularly tapped. From time to time, also, incongruous incidents happened in its white and gold surroundings. A Spanish ex-minister was decoyed from the restaurant and brutally assaulted by Falange gunmen. The wife of a German diplomat threw herself from the top floor when she heard that her husband had been ordered back to Germany. A discreet management shrouded such embarrassing episodes from the visitors. The atmosphere, however, of enemy espionage could not be mistaken. My wife and I found it unbearable, and we at once started looking for a house in which we could live a more normal life. House hunting we found none too easy. The civil war had destroyed or dilapidated almost all the suitable houses, and there were no estate agents in Madrid to give particulars of any that might still be available. With the help, however, of Brigadier Torr, the military attaché, who had an intimate knowledge of Madrid, we eventually found one in the Castellana renamed by the Falange the Avenida Generalissimo Franco. Its apparent drawback was that it was next door to the residence of Baron von Stohrer, the German Ambassador. Only a wall divided the two houses. It was, however, part of my plan of campaign to create an atmosphere of British indifference to alarms and excursions. I accordingly ignored the warnings of those who looked askance at this remarkable contiguity of the rival Embassies and we took the house.

During these days, however, I could not help being inwardly very anxious. Perhaps it was the only moment during my mission when I succumbed to any feeling of personal nervousness. But here was I, straight from the War Cabinet, with all the British secrets of the war still vivid in my mind, surrounded by German

agents and gunmen who would stick at nothing. I might well be kidnapped. Supposing that I was, should I be able to withstand the devilries of the Gestapo determined to extract the vital secrets that I possessed? It was the fear of fear that obsessed me, the fear that I might be weak. I am not ashamed to confess it. Why should I be, when the Duke of Wellington declared "that the one thing that he was afraid of was fear." One of our bravest French agents afterwards told me that the same fear never left him. Fortunately I was never put to the test. I had, however, prepared myself for it. I kept with me night and day an automatic pistol, and I had been careful before leaving London to learn how best to use it either on myself or my assailants. I had also with me a detective from Scotland Yard. A detective can shoot the assailant, but it usually needs more than one man to save the victim. The comfort therefore afforded by his presence was only partial.

An ambassador lives in official retirement until he has presented his Letters of Credence. The spate of diplomatic visits and social engagements only begins after his ceremonial reception by the chiefs of State. There was, however, plenty to do in the days of waiting for my audience with General Franco. Our American colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Weddell, hastened to welcome us to their Embassy. A delightful pair, he, a veritable mine of Spanish knowledge and European culture, a collector of early printed books and the possessor in Virginia of a transported Tudor manor house of historic beauty, and she, the soul of human kindness, generous to an extreme to Spanish good works, and friendly alike to Americans, Spaniards and English. He and she lived in the finest house in Madrid, the Montellano Palace, a modern house in the French style, containing two magnificent Goya portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Fernan Nuñez, and four of the best Guardis that I have ever seen.

Apart from this opening of intimate relations with our American colleagues, there were certain very urgent questions to settle in the Embassy. The most pressing was a plan for the evacuation of the British community from Spain. Each day brought more bad news of the advance of the German army, and with it, anxious inquiries from British subjects as to whether, and if so, how they should immediately leave Spain. These were questions to which there was no good answer. The unknowns and uncertainties were too many. What, for example, would be the attitude of the Falange-ridden Spanish Government? Would

they give exit permits without delay? What lines of communication would be open? What should be the destinations to which the British subjects should be directed? Obviously, at this critical moment the fortress of Gibraltar could not receive several thousands of civilian refugees. Portugal was not easy of access except for transit travellers, and it was doubtful whether there were any British ships available for rescue voyages to Iberian ports. The result was that any plans that we might make were bound to be provisional and unsatisfactory. All, in fact, that we could do was to make certain guesses, accumulate some stores at likely points, and instruct the community to await further instructions. If the need for action had arisen, I doubt whether with the best will in the world we could have evacuated any substantial number.

There were, however, other ways in which we did our best to reassure the British subjects, but I will deal with them in a later chapter. For the moment it was the depressing question of evacuation that occupied our chief attention. It filled also much of the time of the Allied and friendly diplomats in Madrid. Most of them were already packed, ready for immediate departure. "Were we," our friends asked us after our arrival, "going to unpack?" We firmly answered, "Certainly. As long as we are in Madrid, we intend to be comfortable. We have no intention of living in our trunks." We therefore settled in as if we had come to stay for life.

It was now that arose the question of our aeroplane. In accordance with the Foreign Office instructions it was waiting on the aerodrome ready to take us off in an emergency. Should it stay until we saw more clearly what was happening, or should we take a chance and let it go? A little thought convinced me that it was better to send it home. If the Germans stopped at the Spanish frontier, any preparations for our instant departure would look weak and foolish. If, on the other hand, they entered Spain, I could not contemplate abandoning the mission with the British community and the Embassy staff left behind. As there were no two opinions on the matter, the aeroplane flew back to London and left us marooned for better or worse.

For the next few weeks Madrid overflowed with sensational rumours. More than once I was roused in the middle of the night to be told that the Germans had actually crossed the Pyrenees and would be in Madrid in a few hours. I remember my reaction to the news. I drowsily muttered that if this was so,

there was nothing that I could do about it, and turning over in bed, finished my night's rest.

Amidst these excitements I presented my Letters of Credence to General Franco. Technically the Generalissimo was only Chief of the Spanish Government. He had slipped into calling himself Chief of the Spanish State, and his colleagues and followers had accepted his assumption of the title. In any case, whatever his rightful style and title, it was to him that chiefs of mission presented their credentials with all the impressive ceremonial of the old monarchy. A squadron of Moorish cavalry escorted me and my staff, all of us in full uniform, I, wearing the attractive blue, red and gold of an Elder Brother of Trinity House, the streets lined with troops, and a large and curious crowd peering through the windows of the car at the newly arrived Ambassador. When we reached the Palace, we went through the complicated programme of reception. A procession up the magnificent staircase, a short stay in the suite of rooms at the top, and a formal entry into the throne-room famous for its Tiepolo ceiling. Upon one side were General Franco, his ministers, the Bishop of Madrid and a host of high military and civil officers. On the other, the chief of the Protocol, myself and the Embassy staff. Next, came the exchange of speeches, and at the end, a few minutes of desultory conversation with the Caudillo. We then retired in the order in which we had entered, and returned with our escort to the Embassy. I did not fail to note that whilst General Franco's attitude was entirely correct, I was accorded no personal interview such as he invariably gave to the Axis Ambassadors and to several of the neutral chiefs of mission.

When I afterwards reflected upon these first experiences, the Gibraltar demonstration, the ubiquitous signs of German influence, the general conviction amongst Spaniards that the Allies were irrevocably defeated, the almost complete ignorance of British strength, and the evident disinclination on General Franco's part to enter into any serious discussion with the British Ambassador, I began to wonder whether Chamberlain had not been right, and my mission had not started too late.

CHAPTER TWO

IT WAS now painfully clear to me that whatever the future might bring, I was embarked upon the most difficult task of my whole career. On the one hand, I found myself isolated in a post of extreme importance to the Allied cause. On the other hand, whilst I was bowing myself into the diplomatic life of Madrid, the whole of the background behind my mission seemed to be collapsing. When I left England, Spain was still a neutral country five hundred miles from any fighting front. Almost simultaneously with my arrival in Madrid, the scene had entirely changed and the Spanish frontier had become a formidable outpost of the German army.

But it was not in Spain only that these catastrophes were falling upon us. A bare list of the principal events during the momentous weeks of June, July and August records with devastating monotony the straits to which the Allied cause had been reduced.

On the eve of my departure from England, King Leopold of Belgium had offered to capitulate. Whilst I was in Lisbon en route to Madrid, I heard the news of the last evacuations from Dunkirk. A week later, resistance came to an end in Norway, and on the following day, June 10th, Mussolini made his treacherous declaration of war. The following week brought with it, on June 17th, Marshal Petain's request for an armistice, whilst on June 27th, within three days of the signature of the armistice terms, units of the German army reached the Spanish frontier, and Spain became Hitler's terrified neighbour.

So much for the landslide in the west. But events were not standing still in the east. Roumania by accepting an ultimatum on June 26th had created the very dangerous precedent of joining the Axis in all but name, and yet of avoiding the full implications of any declaration of war against the Allies. In the meanwhile, the Japanese were demanding the closing of the Burma Road and showing only too clearly that the vultures were already in the Far East watching the crippled body of the British Empire.

This was the grim picture that faced me immediately after my arrival. Neither Job nor Pharaoh had suffered a more continuous series of misfortunes.

Our whole strategic position in the west had suddenly crumbled. When I had talked to Admiral Phillips in May, he had assumed that so far as Spain was concerned, the sole danger was a possible threat to the Atlantic ports of the Peninsula. With the collapse of France and the entry of Italy into the war, the threat now extended to the whole of the Mediterranean. What this meant to us, was immediately evident. For centuries, the naval command of the Mediterranean had been a fundamental principle of British policy. Indeed, without the unimpeded passage of British ships through the Mediterranean, the maintenance of the British Empire would have been impossible. Gibraltar, Malta, and the Suez Canal had in the course of generations become the outward and visible signs of our control of the great inland sea. Even in the critical days of 1939 when we were hard put to it to withstand the German onslaught, we had been able to keep our unshaken grip on all the important military positions that guarded the narrow waterways between Great Britain, India, China and our Pacific Empire. An essential part in this watch and ward had been taken by the French Fleet. By a wise division of labour, we had in the early months of the war made the British Fleet principally responsible for the Atlantic, and the French Fleet, with its bases at Marseilles, Bizerta, and Casablanca, the predominant guardian of the Mediterranean.

Suddenly, as a result of the French collapse, the Allied plan, so carefully worked out and so faithfully sustained in the first year of the war, had become worthless.

What could now stop the Mediterranean from becoming the *Mare Nostrum* of Mussolini and Hitler? Was it not inevitable that our communications with the Far East would be completely severed, and an irreparable breach made in the British front? Could Malta and Suez hold out, and would the fortress of Gibraltar be of any value if the Naval and Air bases under the shadow of the rock now became untenable? Would not Hitler seize this unique opportunity of pushing through Spain and North Africa and of creating for himself an impregnable base from which to dominate the African continent and threaten the Atlantic highway?

These were the questions that came upon me with a fierce and irresistible impact when I was trying to think out a plan of campaign for my new post.

Of two things I was sure. First, that I had to start from

scratch. Second, that it was now more than ever essential to keep Spain out of the German camp. It was also obvious that the small and slow-motion machine of a peace-time Embassy was altogether unfitted for the crisis in which I found myself. With the whole world in flux, it was necessary to act quickly and, if need be, to take considerable risks rather than to postpone action for formal inquiries and explicit instructions. Fortunately, the British Government realised the urgent and critical nature of the situation, and from the first gave me the free hand that was indispensable if I was to succeed.

I come now to the actual course of events that followed swiftly upon my arrival in Madrid.

Perhaps the most effective way in which I can bring home the alarms and excursions of these three months is to give some extracts from the personal letters that I wrote to my friends and former colleagues in London.

Throughout the whole period of my five years' mission, I maintained a regular correspondence with my old associates. These letters, together with the daily notes that I kept for my personal use, provide a running commentary on day to day vicissitudes. As June, July and August were undoubtedly the three most critical months of my mission, my papers of the time are particularly extensive.

It was especially important during these weeks that the Government in London, and above all the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister, should understand the Spanish position. It was no less necessary for some of my former friends in the House of Commons to be accurately informed about developments in a country that had recently excited such bitter controversy. This is why I give so many extracts from this chapter of my correspondence. The letters provide an almost continuous picture of the conditions that I found in Madrid, and help to explain many subsequent events in after years. I omit the replies of my correspondents. As all of them were most helpful and many contained words of grateful encouragement, it is better to keep them for my personal gratification and to concentrate upon my own letters with their almost daily descriptions of the changing scene of Spain. I cannot help, however, saying how greatly indebted I was to the Prime Minister for his invariable interest in my affairs. Although his replies came as a rule in short telegrams, he was yet able to instil even into a dozen words, not only his unquenchable spirit of confidence in victory but

also the colour and vigour of his inimitable language. "Ses bulletins," like Napoleon's, "*avaient l'éloquence de la victoire.*"

In a different style were the longer letters of Lord Halifax, invaluable to me for the information that they gave me of events outside Spain and for the support they assured me in my difficult task.

Here then are some of the extracts for June, July and August. I preface them with a paragraph from a letter that I wrote to Lord Halifax on the eve of my departure.

TO LORD HALIFAX.

27th May, 1940.

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

"I am writing this note to confirm what I hope to tell you by word of mouth when we see each other to-morrow. With everything so obscure in the world, it is impossible even to foresee in rough outline what I shall be able to do in Spain. I can, however, imagine that the position may become very critical and it may be necessary to take urgent and drastic action. For instance, it might be necessary to spend really large sums upon propaganda and the development of trade with Spain. It might also be necessary to get ourselves away and the Embassy staff at very short notice. I am sure that I can rely on you to help me quickly and effectively in both these respects if the situation arises. It does seem to me that one of the main objects of my going to Spain is to be ready for these dangerous emergencies. I must rely upon you to back me in them. . . . I shall propose to telegraph personally to you if I need help of this kind or if I see the situation developing.

TO LORD HALIFAX.

3rd June, 1940.

"I hear that there is a bag going to-morrow and I am accordingly writing you the first of a series of personal letters. I know as well as anyone how overwhelmed you are with the day to day work of the Cabinet and the office and it may well be that you will not have the time to deal with many of the details that I shall raise in them. At the same time I think it would be well, in view of our personal relations and the peculiar character of my mission, to write to you regularly and to leave it to you to deal with the letters as you think good. My general preamble must be once more a very urgent request that you will give me a free hand, even though it may disarrange the normal procedure of Whitehall. This is absolutely

essential as I think you will see when I describe to you the present position.

"First and foremost it must never be forgotten that I am working here in entirely abnormal conditions. The country is in a state of suppressed excitement, and the Germans and Italians are deeply entrenched in every department of the Government and in every walk of life. Our own prestige, as a result of the Civil War and of the comparatively small part that we have played since it, is very low. The day to day conditions of life are impossible. Food is very short and daily more expensive, ordinary life is dislocated and everyone is living on their nerves. I cannot go out without an army of police guards, and the Embassy looks like an entrenched camp. On the top of all this are the completely inadequate arrangements for the Embassy and our various British organisations in Madrid. The staff is everywhere overcrowded and overworked, whilst the Embassy itself is the most horrible house that I have ever seen. I will not go further into these details in this letter, as by the time it reaches you, I shall have sent you a telegram upon the subject. You can, however, take it from me that unless the changes I propose are made, and made very quickly, my mission will not work and it will be very doubtful whether anything will be gained by my continuing it. I know how tiresome all these things must be to you when you are dealing with great events in London. I cannot however help saying that we have reached the parting of the ways in Spain and if we are to start a new chapter I must have suitable machinery with which to work. It may be that things have gone too far to make the attempt worth while. You must judge of this. My own first impression would be that I must try it out and be given a chance, even though it is an outside one, for succeeding.

"Passing from these machinery questions to the political position here, I have tried in my telegrams to give you some idea of the present difficulties. The gossip is everywhere that I have come out to give Spain Gibraltar, Tangier and Morocco. The gossip is no doubt stimulated by German propaganda with a view to creating an anti-climax when I do not produce these things out of my pocket. The demonstrations around the Embassy are all a part of this move. The Government, including Franco, are obviously winking at them. Whilst you can rely upon me to keep my head in this atmosphere, I.

must rely upon you to consider very carefully and urgently the way that I should deal with big questions of this kind.

"The Press Secretary, whom I have just seen, tells me that Barcelona and the neighbourhood are full of the most alarmist reports and rumours. I will not weary you with more of this pessimistic stuff, but I feel that I ought at once to draw for you the framework in which I am working. It is a framework of a very rickety kind and the picture is a picture of instability, risk and sudden surprise."

TO LORD BEAVERBROOK.

6th June, 1940.

Minister of Aircraft Production.

"If I had known of the difficulties of this place, I never should have come here. Everyone assumes in London that things were going all right here and it only needed someone presentable like myself to keep everyone in a good temper. Nothing could be further from the truth. Things have been going very badly here. The Germans are dug in in every direction and becoming more and more aggressive. Nine Spaniards out of ten believe that Hitler will win the war in three weeks.

TO MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

6th June, 1940.

Lord President of the Council.

"You told me the other day in Downing Street that you thought I was very courageous in undertaking this job. After a week in Madrid I would say that it was more than courageous, it was foolhardy. For I have found myself in the midst of every sort of difficulty with little or no daylight to guide me through it. Living in Madrid is like living in a besieged city. There is a shortage of almost everything, prices are terribly high and there is a heavy atmosphere of impending crisis on all sides. For instance, I cannot even put my head out of my hotel rooms without finding an army of gunmen in the passage who, though they do not look like it, are presumed to be the police that are guarding me. When I go into the street, there is an even greater army of guards and two police cars with mine wherever I go. All this is a little shocking to the nerves in taking over a new post."

TO MR. DUFF COOPER, M.P.
Minister of Information.

7th June, 1940.

"I am writing this line to say that I am sending by this bag a dispatch about press and various kindred questions in Spain. Having only been here a week, it would be foolish for me to give you a fully considered view of the position. I have, however, seen enough to realise the fact that our present machine is totally inadequate. I have never seen so complete a control of the means of communication, press, propaganda, aviation, etc., as the Germans have here. Indeed, I go so far as to say that the Embassy and I are only existing here on German sufferance. I do not believe that anyone in England has yet fully realised the gravity of this situation, and I must rely upon you with your imagination to help me to extricate our affairs from this abyss. I am asking in my dispatch for a number of detailed improvements in the Press Section, and all these, I hope, will go through without delay."

TO LORD HALIFAX.

9th June, 1940.

"Until I get into my house next week and until the various missions are concentrated under one roof in this Embassy, it is impossible to hope, I will not say for efficiency, but I will go further and say for even maintaining a show that a British mission exists. When therefore I ask for changes in the machinery, you must not think that they are the requests of an irritable newcomer. They are in my view absolutely essential if we are to recover any of the ground that we have lost to the Germans. Many people here think that it is too late to make the attempt. Anyhow, I have told you that I will make it and if I find that it is hopeless, I will equally tell you that it is hopeless."

"This place is full of rumours of every kind and there is no disguising the fact that the continuous pressure of German propaganda has a depressing effect upon everyone. To counteract this I have written a kind of manifesto to the staff of the Embassy saying in words of one syllable that the war is not going to end in three weeks, that the British Navy is intact and that the British Air Force has replaced its losses. I have also gone out of my way to appear completely unconcerned as to the way things are going. For instance, I went down and played tennis at the club last Sunday, whilst the fact that I have taken a house next door to the German Ambassador's

house, has given the impression that whatever may be the inner state of my mind, I am not outwardly rattled at all. This kind of thing starts rumour, and rumour is all important in a town where there is no free press or expression of public opinion. From all accounts the rumour going about me is that I am one of the unintelligible English who behave differently from other people. It seems futile to talk about all these things while the battle is going on, but there it is, one must go on. One couldn't go on with one's work at all, if one felt that the world was going to end in the next few weeks."

TO LORD HALIFAX.

11th June, 1940.

"You cannot imagine how isolated I feel here. We have had no British papers since we arrived, and the Spanish press contains nothing more than monotonous repetitions of German propaganda. It is really disturbing how much enemy propaganda, even though you know it to be untrue and foolish, undermines one's resolution. Perhaps in this connection you could tell one of your people to arrange for *The Times* to come out to me regularly in the confidential bags. I know that the Office does not approve of newspapers in the bags, but in this case it seems to me essential that I should at least get one British paper regularly. It is as important to me as despatches and official communications.

"You may now like my further impressions of this curious place. The more I see of it, the more I am convinced that it is still passing through a period of revolutionary crisis. The streets are filled with soldiers, Falangists and police, the roads are heavily patrolled with guards of all kinds and the atmosphere is the atmosphere of some impending *coup d'état*. From all accounts the machine of government does not work, whilst in daily life there is every kind of difficulty owing to the breakdown of communications and the fact that most of the skilled workmen of the country are either dead or in prison. For the moment the Germans and Italians seem unlikely to attempt a coup, but if this is so, it is only because they believe that they will be able to push Franco and the Government into war. If they find Franco resolute against war, it seems to me more than probable that they will turn round upon him and use the many forces of discontent to get rid of him.

"I still feel myself groping in the dark, nor is it easy to fit oneself into a new life that varies between high politics and social futility. Moreover, to one who comes from Whitehall offices, the machinery of an Embassy seems almost incredibly inefficient. However, as I told you last week, Yencken is a tower of strength and is fitted to hold any post in this or any other service.

"The bag does not go until to-morrow and to-day has brought with it considerable commotion, so I am adding these lines about the present position. As you will have seen, I telegraphed at once about the declaration of non-belligerency. It is no doubt premature to draw from it any final conclusion, and in any case it would be foolish for me to dogmatise about what the Spaniards will or will not do when I have only been here so short a time. I will however be so bold as to send you my own guess about it.

"There has been a tremendous battle going on over Franco's body. The Italians were determined to get him into the war as soon as Italy came in and from all accounts Mussolini has a very great influence with him. Within Spain itself the Falange have for some time been trying to gain control of the Government machine and it looked as if this was their chance. Franco and his advisers know that the country is not in a position to go to war. At the same time they are afraid of Germany and very friendly with Italy.

"As to the French and ourselves, opinions vary as to which of us the Spaniards dislike the most. This being the situation, it seems to me probable that Franco wishes at one and the same time to show his friendliness to the Axis Powers and particularly the Italians, and to go far enough in this direction to keep the Falange in hand without definitely committing himself to them in the immediate future. The whole Government is convinced that France is finished and that they are likely to see the Germans at Bordeaux and Bayonne in the near future, and that this being so, they must keep in well with the Axis Powers.

"The guess that I base upon this survey is that Franco does not wish at present to come into the war but that he has put himself into a strategic position from which he can enter the war if things go irrevocably badly for the French.

"The conclusion that I draw from it is that so far from throwing up the sponge, we must play every card that we can

to strengthen the anti-war feeling in the country. This feeling is very wide and deep-seated and it is based upon the solid fact that the country, including Madrid, is already starving. In present circumstances it will be obviously very difficult to play our hand. For obvious reasons I will not go into any detail about it. We may have to play high cards and even so they may not take the trick, but our only chance is to play them."

TO WINSTON CHURCHILL.

12th June, 1940.

"At present I am not at all sure whether I shall be able to do any permanent good. When I arrived I found the whole of Madrid, including many of our own people, in a state of nervous excitement. Almost all the signs pointed towards either a change of policy by the Government or an attempt to overthrow the Government. The atmosphere was the atmosphere of a city in a state of siege, no food, fantastic prices, quantities of troops and police at every street corner. It was evident that the Italians and Germans were making a frantic effort to push Spain into the war simultaneously with Italy. From all accounts my visit made a very opportune diversion behind which the anti-war forces were able to make a counter-attack and for the moment the position was held. The battle has since been renewed with even greater force since Italy came in. . . ."

TO MR. R. A. BUTLER.

12th June, 1940.

Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

"The conditions of work are very difficult here and the conditions of living even greater. These facts make hay of most of the routine arrangements for diplomatic missions. A real comparison is much more Humphreys at Kabul in the old days when you and I were together at the India Office."

TO LORD HALIFAX.

20th June, 1940.

"I wonder which of us two is the more bewildered, you in the middle of things or I in my almost complete isolation. Anyhow, we should both go mad if we had not our jobs to perform. Here, I have been going about my way as best I could. It is no good trying to make Great Britain popular, except possibly with a certain number of conservative monarchists. . . ."

"If, however, I am to succeed I would ask you to look upon Spanish questions in general and the position of the Madrid Embassy in particular from a much wider angle than was conceivable in the past. I am convinced that if we are to do anything useful here, we must accept the fact that the new Spain regards itself as the liveliest part of the Latin race and that on this account our mission here ought to be upon a broader and more impressive basis than it has ever been in the past. To put it into a single sentence, these southern Latins think that Madrid is far more important than Paris. In any case, now that Paris and Rome have both gone I think that you would do well to concentrate a great deal of attention upon Madrid."

TO LORD BEAVERBROOK.

21st June, 1940.

"You cannot imagine what a racket I have had here, alarms and excursions day and night and a depressing feeling of impending catastrophe all round. In face of it all I have gone on with my game of bluff and I think I can say that I am steadily creating a legend about me in which even the more hostile Spaniards are becoming interested and what is more important, I am making myself the centre of the movement against the Spanish entry into the war. There can be no question of making ourselves popular in Spain. The most I can do is to play upon the Spanish dislike of another war at a time when they are so exhausted after the Civil War."

TO LORD HALIFAX.

26th June, 1940.

"A bag has arrived unexpectedly this morning and I have accordingly received your letter of the 19th June. Many thanks for it. I will not comment upon the terrific catastrophes that have taken place since last I wrote as they are much too great for any casual remarks from me.

"I will rather tell you about the position here. The arrival of the Germans on the Pyrenees is a tremendous event in the eyes of every Spaniard. Will it mean the passage of German troops through Spain to Portugal or Africa? Will it mean even more, and bring about the German occupation of strategic points in Spain and the setting up of a puppet Government in German hands? Will it mean, at least for the time being, a continuance of the present precarious position

of non-belligerency with constant German pressure, but with no overt act of German domination?

"I can no more answer these questions than you can answer the bigger questions about the future of the Empire and the world. In the meanwhile I have had constant talks with representative people on the subject, and I have found no agreement amongst them as to the answer. The view, however, that mostly impresses me is that the Germans will not attempt direct action in Spain until they have made their attack upon Great Britain. As things are, they have the Spanish Government very much under their power, and it is doubtful whether they would gain anything by a change that, whilst it would give them a greater appearance of influence, would turn against them large bodies of public opinion in the country.

"I attach the greatest possible importance to avoiding trouble between us and Spain over any Moroccan question. To Franco and Beigbeder Morocco is as much as ever India was to Lord Lawrence or, in our own times, to Michael O'Dwyer. When I see Beigbeder, it does not matter what we discuss; it always comes back sooner or later, to Morocco. It is clear to me that he and Franco are genuinely nervous of Italy in Morocco.

"It is obvious that everyone here is terrified of famine. The whole of Spain is already suffering from something very near famine and the harvest in many parts of the country is as bad as it can be. If we are not careful, the hunger cry, fomented by German propaganda, will be turned entirely against us. It is essential that we should at once clear our minds as to what we can do to prevent the starvation of Spain and that, having cleared our minds, we should decide upon a firm and consistent policy. When Franco told me last Saturday that the blockade could not affect Europe, he was obviously thinking of possible supplies of foodstuffs from North Africa. When, however, I saw Beigbeder the next day, it was clear to me that Franco was saying what he wished rather than what he really believed. Famine is the overwhelming fear in Spain and with good reason, for in any other country except Spain I should say that the country is already very near it.

"Lastly, I cannot say too strongly that if I am to play the hand that I suggest I must not be impeded by recriminations over the past. When I say this I do not wish to criticise

any individual or the fact that any individual holds strong views about the past. I simply state the fact that in the present state of Spain it is not only mischievous to rake up the merits of the Spanish Civil War, but it is also useless. If Franco's Government fell to-morrow, there is not the least chance of a stable Government of the left. The inevitable result would be confusion, civil war and every kind of opportunity for the Germans and Italians to exploit the situation. I would therefore ask you to help me to your utmost in this matter. If I am to play a hand with nothing higher in it than a five of clubs, I must have a partner who will try to pull me out of an almost impossible game."

TO MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL.

27th June, 1940.

"As to gossip here, you can imagine the state of nerves in which Spain and Madrid find themselves after the German arrival on the Pyrenees. I try to keep an appearance of calm but it is not always easy in face of a completely germanised press and many germanised departments of State. I still think, however, that it is worth trying to keep some influence here. The chance of succeeding may be a small one, but it is time that we need. Supposing we can keep Spain out of the war even for a comparatively short time, it is worth the attempt. I should not say this if it were not for the fact that nine people out of ten in the country do not wish to be involved in the war."

TO LORD HALIFAX.

1st July, 1940.

"I am afraid that things have become much more difficult since the Germans came to the Pyrenees. Already the Germans and Spaniards are fraternising on the frontier, though I am doing my utmost to stop it. It looks to me as if the German's game is to create a friendly atmosphere before they make their demands.

"When the demands come, it is difficult to see how they can be resisted. The will to resist is there, but not the power. All that I can do is to try to strengthen the will and hope that something may turn up before the demands are actually made."

TO MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

1st July, 1940.

"As you may imagine, the arrival of the Germans on the

Pyrenees has made my work far more difficult than ever. The only solid ground left is the general unwillingness of most Spaniards to go to war. But the practical results of this very unwillingness are not as simple as might appear at first sight. For one of the chief causes of it is the unpreparedness of the defence forces. If the army and the air force are in no position to go to war, they are equally in no position to resist any really serious German push. All that I can do is to accumulate as much influence as I can with the public men who are against war, to play for time and to hope that something may eventually forestall the kind of German pressure that would break down everything before it. It looks to me as if at present the Germans are playing the game of appearing to be Spain's greatest friends and of doing everything that they can to encourage fraternising at the frontier. They may go on with this game for some time longer in order to have a friendly rather than a stubborn Spain when they make their ultimatum in the future.

"Meanwhile the position here is extremely uncomfortable. Not a day passes without some troublesome incident. On Friday, for instance, the Spanish wireless gave out that I was negotiating a peace with the Germans through the medium of the Duke of Windsor. On Saturday, the British flags were torn off the Embassy cars at the Sports Club, and yesterday there was a paragraph passed by the Censor that the Germans were going to have a march past through the streets of San Sebastian. All these things not only add greatly to one's worries, but they are the kind of incidents that may lead to serious trouble. All of them are almost openly organised by the Germans, for I am convinced that if the Spaniards were left to themselves they would be friendly disposed to us. As we are virtually stopped from doing any propaganda and we can get nothing whatever into the Spanish press, the only thing that I can do is to exploit to the utmost the personal side of the mission. Maud is, of course, invaluable in this respect and I think that we can both say that on this personal side the position is very much better than it was when we arrived. We have been seeing all sorts and conditions of people and have had the biggest cocktail party that anyone has seen in Madrid since the Spanish war started. The social side of one's work, apart from the feeling that when the world is crashing one does not want to be

bothered with it, is made much more difficult by the troubles of living and running a house in the present conditions of Madrid."

TO LORD HALIFAX.

5th July, 1940.

"I cannot say what the ultimate reactions will be here over the Oran affair. For the moment they will be outwardly very bad. Petain is a hero to most Spaniards and they are particularly delighted with him at this moment in his attempt to suppress constitutional institutions in France. Possibly a little reflection will make sensible people take a different view and see in it a sign of our strength."

TO MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

26th July, 1940.

"You well describe my position as on a knife's edge. During the last week, the edge has become thinner and sharper than ever. I have just been dictating a despatch that tells of the alarms and excursions in which I have been involved. The rumours baffle description. The trouble is that in a country where there is no free press, false reports are given far more credence than they would be, if people knew even a little of the truth, and in a city like Madrid where the climate is very trying and the heat terrific, everybody's nerves are very jumpy. Search, however, as much as I can, I fail to find any solid foundation for the rumours."

TO LORD HANKEY.

27th July, 1940.

Chancellor of the Duke of Lancaster.

"One of the difficulties here is the inexperience of the Ministers and the inadequacy of their administrative machine. I suppose this is bound to happen after a civil war in which officials are appointed and dismissed according to the side they have taken. It is particularly difficult to get things done at the present moment. The heat is terrific and the one unshakeable custom of Spain is a siesta that gets longer and longer, and during which Government offices are totally uninhabited. Your and my orderly mind cannot help being shocked by a mode of life that gets up very late, never has luncheon before two, nor dinner before ten and sleeps for most of the time between luncheon and dinner."

"As for the general position here, I wonder if you have had time to read a letter that I wrote about a fortnight

ago. In it I have tried to set out the position. In one important respect it is different from the Italian situation before Italy's entry into the war. Mussolini always wished to bring Italy in on Hitler's side. Franco definitely wishes to keep out. Franco is quite right. Spain is not in a position to go to war and, unless the war was over in a few days, the result would inevitably be famine and an economic crisis here in which Franco would find it very difficult to keep his feet. This is the reason why, in spite of a completely pro-German press, I go on saying that it is a mistake to assume that Spain will go the way of Italy. If I am right in this view, it is equally obvious that to treat Spain as an enemy is playing into the hands of the Germans, who are determined to force the country into war against its wish."

TO MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

30th July, 1940.

"In these last days numbers of foreign diplomats have been passing through Madrid. What struck me about several of them, including one or two of the American Ambassadors, was their ignorance of the real state of affairs in the British Isles. I think that they have been so much under the fire of enemy propaganda that they begin to believe that the air and submarine attacks have brought British life to a standstill and that war weariness was showing itself in the country. Their attitude is very understandable. Having lived here for several weeks with nothing but German propaganda in the press and on the wireless, it is sometimes difficult even for me to take anything but a pessimistic view of the way things are going. Persistent propaganda, however untruthful, eventually has an effect."

TO LORD BEAVERBROOK.

7th August, 1940.

"The rumours here are beyond description and it is heavy work swimming against their stream. People, however, who ought to know still discount them. My own impression is that the Spaniards are sitting on the fence until they see how the invasion of England, and possibly Egypt, goes. They are convinced that they will get something for certain out of the war in Africa and an arrangement about Gibraltar. But they are terribly short of everything that is needed for fighting and on that account they would only come into the war if they were convinced that it was virtually over. They have seen

the Italian mistake in assuming too soon that the war was over and I should be surprised if with this in their minds they fall into the same miscalculation."

TO LORD HALIFAX.

8th August, 1940.

"You will probably like a further report as to how things are going here. I can put the story into a single sentence: "the same, only more so." The same, to the extent that the Government is still holding on to non-belligerency. The more so, because the panic rumours have become a thousand times worse during the last fortnight.

"As you will have seen from my telegrams, I have been seeing Beigbeder constantly. I have found him very talkative and very tired, obviously feeling the strain of German and Italian pressure and the great difficulty of the Spanish position between a military and a maritime belligerent.

"The rumours grow in intensity every day. The night before last, for instance, the Military Attaché was rung up in the middle of the night by a member of the French Embassy, who said that he had just received a telephone message from San Sebastian from the French Consul, who had actually seen German units advancing through northern Spain. The military attaché at once got on to San Sebastian and was told by the French Consul himself that he had spent the day at Irun looking after refugees and had noticed no signs of unusual activity at all. The French Ambassador, who is very alarmist, from time to time descends upon me with stories of German machines on every Spanish aerodrome. His Counsellor, the most intelligent member of his staff, has just given Yencken an account of a discussion that he had with Serrano Suñer, in which Serrano Suñer explained the German plan against England and showed his complete conviction that it would succeed in three days. All these rumours on the top of a constantly German-fed press are very irritating, particularly when they come at a time when Madrid is as hot as Delhi in August. The principal people in the Embassy form, however, a tower of strength against this kind of propaganda."

TO LORD HALIFAX.

17th August, 1940.

"We have just ended a very difficult week. It has been the second big crisis since I have been here. The first was

when I had the row with the Government over the proposed parade of German troops in San Sebastian. This week it has been over an iniquitous article in *Arriba*, the Falangist paper. If I had not made an equally great row over it, our friends in the Government would have let the enemy get away with it and we should have been far weaker in the future. As it is, we have come out of the affair pretty well. I might have pushed it further and broken off all the trade negotiations until I received a definite guarantee about the press. I am afraid that if I had done this, the German reaction would have been so ferocious that our friends might not have been able to withstand it. This is always the trouble. If we push our justifiable complaints too far, we run the risk of a complete victory being turned into a subsequent defeat by a German counter-offensive. Anyhow, we have got out of this week not too badly and our position is definitely stronger."

CHAPTER THREE

THESE LETTERS will, I hope, have given some idea of the strange atmosphere into which I had been thrown. In the Allied camp, it was one of doubt, despondency and almost despair. In the enemy camp, of complete and truculent triumph.

If I was to make any impression on this hostile front, it was a case of now or never. It seemed as if Spain was inevitably within a few weeks of German occupation. The difficult question was to know how to begin my counter-offensive. When I looked at my hand, it was only too clear that I had no good cards in it. The only hope was a bluff declaration that might at least hold up the rubber and give us another deal.

The first step was to make the acquaintancè of my fellow-players. Not, of course, of the Germans. For, although my wife and I had to attend official ceremonies at which the Axis diplomats were present, we naturally had no personal contact with them. The German representatives, Baron and Baroness von Stohrer, were a formidable pair. Very tall and impressive, brilliant linguists and experienced diplomats, they not only dominated Madrid society, but alone of the diplomatic corps were on intimate terms with General and Señora de Franco.

Von Stohrer's knowledge of Spain was remarkable for any foreigner, but even more remarkable for a diplomat. There was good reason for it. It was he who as First Secretary of the German Embassy during the first world war, organised German sabotage in Catalonia against the Catalan industries that were then working for the Allies. It seems also certain that he was involved in the plot against the life of Count Romanones, the then Prime Minister and leader of the pro-Ally party in the Government. In any case, the evidence against him was so strong that the Spanish Government insisted on his withdrawal. No one would have associated this lurid past with the genial giant who had made so many British friends in Cairo and whom I now saw for the first time in Madrid. Once again I was confirmed in the view that experience has often forced upon me that it is usually better not to look the part. It was said during the Versailles negotiations of a very wise English Ambassador, "*malgré sa mine idiotic c'est un diplomate très intelligent.*" In

von Stohrer's case it was not so much in spite but because of his appearance that he acquired and maintained his great influence.

Amongst the Allied Ambassadors, I was fortunate in finding a colleague of outstanding ability and distinction in Theotonio Pereira, the representative of Portugal, our oldest ally. He also was very tall. He also was an outstanding figure in the social world and, being a Latin and not a German, he possessed a sympathy and sensibility that won him the hearts of Spaniards and foreign diplomats alike. He had been one of Dr. Salazar's young men. In his early twenties, he had become Minister of Commerce, and, still very young, had been appointed Ambassador in Madrid at the end of the Civil War. I shall recur to him in these memoirs. It is sufficient at this point to say that he gave me his help and friendship from the very first day of my arrival.

Others of my colleagues I shall mention in due course. Except in the case of Mr. Weddell, the American Ambassador, with whom I had almost daily discussions and the most friendly relations, all that was possible in the first few weeks of my mission was a conventional exchange of official visits.

My immediate task was with the Spanish Government, and particularly with its three principal members, General Franco, the self-appointed Chief of State, Colonel Beigbeder, the Foreign Minister and Señor Serrano Suñer, General Franco's brother-in-law, the Minister of the Interior—known in Spain as the Minister of the Gobernacion. With each of these three I at once made contact.

First, with General Franco. When I presented my Letters of Credence, I had only a superficial opportunity for judging the Chief of the Spanish Government. Amidst the Ministers, Generals and Bishops, who were drawn up to receive me, his small, rather corpulent, bourgeois figure seemed insignificant. His voice was very different from the uncontrolled shrieks of Hitler or the theatrically modulated bass of Mussolini. It was indeed the voice of a doctor with a good bedside manner, and of a doctor with a big family practice and an assured income. My first sight of him made me wonder how he could ever have been the brilliant young officer in Morocco and the Commander-in-Chief in a savage civil war.

As I had no wish to enter upon any serious discussion in a throne-room filled with officials, I was not sorry that our first talk was confined to platitudes, and that he showed no sign of wishing to break the ceremonial ice. I was, however, determined

to come to business as soon as I had the chance. One of my first requests, therefore, to Colonel Beigbeder was for a private audience with the great man. Requests of this kind had to pass through the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the officials of General Franco's household and, as a rule, except for the German Ambassador, took some days or even weeks to arrange. Both General Franco and successive Ministers for Foreign Affairs made it abundantly clear that the Chief of the Spanish State did not deal with departmental affairs and that any interview with him was in the nature of an exceptional favour, only to be granted as the King would grant an audience at Buckingham Palace. This feature of dictatorial protocol was never fully realised outside the totalitarian countries. Allied Governments were apt to instruct their representatives to discuss any critical question direct with the dictator, whereas it might be weeks or, as in the case of Italy, months before an Ambassador could penetrate to the dictator's presence. In Madrid, for instance, the American Ambassador had once to wait many weeks for an interview of the utmost importance to Spanish-American relations.

The protocol was obviously devised with the purpose of isolating the Generalissimo from Allied influences. Any pretext for its justification was constantly exploded by the frequent interviews that Baron von Stohrer was always able to arrange at a moment's notice.

For my first visit, at least, I had only to wait until June 22nd. The audience was for midday at the Palace of the Pardo, fifteen kilometres from Madrid. It was at this small and attractive royal residence that General Franco lived for the greater part of the year. It had been the hunting box of many kings. The remains of the ilex forest that originally covered the surrounding country still harboured greater quantities of rabbits, red-legged partridges and fallow deer. It was here that Charles III. and Charles IV. used day after day to shoot incredible quantities of game of all sorts. Even now the goddess of sport still dominated the place. For General Franco had succumbed to the same *folie de la chasse* that kept Charles IV. shooting partridges every day of the week of the Battle of Trafalgar.

As I drove to the Palace, I saw for the first time the devastation of the university city and passed over the trickling Manzanares that needed much more than ever the cup of water offered to the wounded soldier.

The village of the Pardo, although for the most part built

by Charles III., the last Spanish King to be interested in town planning, is sordid and miserable. Why is it that slum areas so often surround royal palaces? Is it a relic of the crowd of hangers-on that in the golden days of courts demoralised the neighbourhood? In any case, there is often in the precincts of a palace the same atmosphere of squalor that camp followers create around barracks. The Pardo shows this feature at its worst. A dirty and miserable village, a high palace wall and a row of huge barrack blocks go far to spoil the Velasquez landscape and the view of the low quadrilateral palace that had been built by the Emperor Charles V. and restored in the eighteenth century. Moreover, the presence of a modern dictator inevitably destroys the amenities of a small and intimate palace. Military and civil guards are at every corner. Moroccan cavalry, the first to be seen in Spain since the Moors were driven out more than four centuries ago, watch the gate. Even an Ambassador is detained while the sentries telephone for instructions to the palace. I seemed to be visiting an oriental despot in the East rather than a Spanish General in the west. Indeed, the impression of grim seclusion given me by the environment of this chief of a police state was far stronger than any that I had felt in visiting the last Sultan of Turkey in Constantinople.

Inside, as a contrast, the palace was altogether delightful. Well-proportioned rooms, superb tapestries, carpets of the Royal Factory and the effect of a rich and comfortable country house remote from the cares and worries of high politics.

General Franco received me in accordance with his regular habit in a spacious library. Although the sun was shining brightly outside, the electric light was blazing. He himself sat in front of a writing-table on which I remarked the signed photographs of Hitler and Mussolini. I was opposite to him with an interpreter standing or sitting between us. An interpreter was necessary as he refused to talk anything but Spanish, and my Spanish, although I could understand every word that he said, was not sufficiently good for a serious discussion.

My first interview did not materially differ in form from the others that I subsequently had with him. He began with an opening speech. I then made my case at some length, and he ended with a concluding statement. It was always difficult to draw him into a discussion that involved the interplay of question and answer. It was even more difficult to penetrate the cotton-wool entanglements of his amazing complacency. In my first

interview, for instance, I made a cautious reference to the economic needs of Spain. Although it was common knowledge that the country was on the verge of starvation, he brushed aside my remarks by declaring that Spain needed nothing from the British Empire, and that any imports that were required would come from North Africa. Such staggering complacency made any serious discussion almost impossible.

The other subject that emerged at this first interview was Spanish non-belligerency. In September, 1939, he had proclaimed Spanish neutrality. On June 12th, two days after Mussolini's stab in the back of the Allies, Franco had suddenly adopted the equivocal and ill-omened status of non-belligerency. This change, very sinister at first sight, needed an explanation. His answer was that, as the war had now come into the Mediterranean, it was necessary for Spain to show its direct interest in what had happened and to be prepared for all emergencies. The change, he added, did not mean that the Spanish Government had departed from their general policy of abstention from the war.

As to the course of the war, it was clear from almost everything that he said, that he regarded an Allied victory as entirely impossible. "Why," he asked, "do you not end the war now? You can never win it. All that will happen if the war is allowed to continue, will be the destruction of European civilisation." For my part, I left him in no doubt as to our determination to go on to the end, and as to our certainty of ultimate victory; and I reminded him that there were moments in the Spanish Civil War when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb, and when none the less he would have repudiated any suggestion of peace or surrender. We parted, he, completely blind to the moral and material strength of the British Empire; I, astonished at his unshakable complacency and at his evident conviction that he had been marked out by Providence to save his country and to take a leading part in the reconstruction of a new world.

A month afterwards, he went still further in rejecting the possibility of an Allied victory. In his annual speech to celebrate the start of the Nationalist movement on July 18th, 1936, he laid public claim to Gibraltar and declared that "two million soldiers" were ready to revive Spain's glorious past. "It is necessary," he declared, "to make a nation, to forge an empire. To do that, our first task must be to strengthen the unity of Spain. There remains a duty and a mission, the command of Gibraltar, African expansion and the permanence of a policy of unity." These words

were no mere rhetoric. They were intended to express the definite intentions of the Spanish Government. If there was any doubt of this intention, it was dissipated on the day following the speech, when there was an endless march past of the army and the Falange in his presence in the Via Castellana. As all the Diplomatic Corps were to attend, I could not well absent myself. My wife and I therefore had to endure a long wait in the blazing sun—for dictators, unlike kings, feel it essential to keep the world waiting—and to listen to the shouts of a carefully organised "claque" of "Gibraltar Español." When it became clear that this demonstration was directed against me, we ostentatiously left the ceremony. The fact that I obtained no satisfaction from my subsequent protest, showed unmistakably that the Government was behind this outburst and that neither General Franco nor his brother-in-law in any way disapproved of it.

It was too soon to assess the Caudillo's character or explain his rise to fame. There was obviously more in him than met the eye, or how else could this young officer of Jewish origin, little influence and unimpressive personality have risen to the highest post in the state?

I had, however, seen enough of him and his surroundings to realise that the only bond between us was the desire to keep Spain out of the war. There, our common ground ended. His outlook and intentions were altogether different from ours. The red peril obsessed his mind and dominated his every action. British democracy and British strength he would always resent and never understand. Whilst we desired Spanish non-belligerency for our set purpose of destroying Nazism, he regarded it as the most effective means of establishing his totalitarian régime and satisfying Spanish aspirations in Gibraltar and Africa when the inevitable Axis victory had been achieved. The fact that our motives were so divergent did not, however, detract from the importance of supporting him in any resistance that he might make to German aggression.

The mysterious movements of Providence, I reflected, might indeed be providing a dictator for the destruction of other dictators. In any case, I came to the conclusion that however profoundly we might disapprove of his régime, he could be useful to the Allied cause as long as he kept Spain genuinely non-belligerent.

I come to the second of my new acquaintances, Colonel Beigbeder, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. As soon as I was

duly accredited, I embarked on a series of visits to his Ministry that soon became daily events. Crises, arising in quick succession, were always needing my personal intervention. The appearance of German troops in Northern Spain, the entry of a Spanish garrison into Tangier, the vicious attacks of the Spanish press upon the British Empire, the maltreatment of British subjects—these and many other questions crowded upon me without intermission. Normally, I suppose, many of the details connected with them would have been arranged between the staffs of the Ministry and the Embassy. In Madrid, however, it needed the direct intervention of the Foreign Minister and the Ambassador for even the most insignificant decision to be taken. The Civil War had destroyed the permanent civil service and the Ministry, inadequately staffed, badly housed in the former Prison of the Nobles and always at a disadvantage in face of the more powerful Departments of War and the Interior, was in a constant state of hesitancy and confusion.

Over this small department presided Colonel Beigbeder, as romantic a personality as I have ever known. His family was of Breton extraction. He himself had, like many other Spanish officers, made his name in Morocco. "We are all Moors," he once said to me, and certainly his dark, thin Quixotic figure was more in keeping with the Riff and the desert than with the small, stuffy room in which he sat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From time to time the winds of Africa would break into the stifling heat of Madrid and, in the middle of a discussion of high politics, he would start an Arabic chant from the illuminated Koran that always lay on his table.

From the very first interview he and I understood each other. Whatever were our daily problems and disputes, we both detested German tyranny, and all the evil associations of the police state. His was the outlook of a good European who fully realised the threat to European civilisation. The new tyranny, whether it showed itself in German brutality or in the persecutions of the Falange gunmen, he whole-heartedly detested. At one time, when he was military attaché in Berlin, he had been impressed by the overwhelming strength of the German machine. The later developments of German aggression and perhaps also my frequent talks with him, turned what admiration he had then felt into a very definite repulsion.

Of England he had no personal knowledge. Being, however, a well-read historian, he had marked the fact that, although we

have the very bad habit of losing the first battles of every war, we always win the last. Even in June, 1946, when almost everyone else in Spain thought that the last battle had been fought, and that we had failed to live up to our long tradition, he still believed in the possibility of a British recovery. "The British bull," he said to me, "has not yet come into the arena. Will it fight? And if so, how will it fight? No one can say that it is dead until the *corrida* is over."

That I was lucky to begin my official work with this sympathetic and attractive friend was soon very evident. How fortunate, I did not fully understand until he was ousted from his post by Serrano Suñer.

My first serious discussion with Colonel Beigbeder was over the Spanish entry into Tangier on June 14th. For more than forty years Tangier had been a danger spot for the great powers of Europe. Each had been suspicious of the other's influence at this key point of the Mediterranean. The result had been a compromise under which an international administration had been created for the town and a small zone around it. No one can claim that it was a perfect arrangement. Nominally, under the Sultan of Morocco, actually under the predominant influence of the French, to whom we had given an almost free hand in return for their acceptance of our special position in Egypt, the zone had become a centre of intrigue, particularly Italian, and of black market transactions in currency and commodities of all kinds. Certainly in 1940 it was neither a good example of international control nor of a substantial bulwark against external attack.

When Italy declared war on the Allies on June 10th, there was a plausible reason for thinking that Mussolini might attempt to occupy the zone, the more so as there were several thousand Italian subjects, mostly Fascists, settled within it.

In any case, this was the pretext given by the Spanish Government for marching troops into the town and district on June 14th. Colonel Beigbeder himself was evidently anxious to proceed in as unprovocative a manner as possible. A sudden coup in the German style was altogether contrary to his conception of correct action. He accordingly explained to Comte de la Baume, the French Ambassador, the peculiar dangers of the situation and proposed that in order to forestall Mussolini, the British and French Governments should approve the entry of Spanish reinforcements into the zone, on the understanding that it was an exceptional and temporary arrangement in the interests of

internal and external security, and in no way prejudicial to the permanence of the international régime. The French Government, being very nervous of Italian aggression in Morocco and in any case being powerless to resist Spanish entry into the zone, acquiesced on the definite understanding that it should be clearly stated that "Spanish troops had only arrived for the temporary purpose of maintaining order." Beigbeder readily agreed to make it clear in the Spanish communiqué that the movement into the zone, so far from being an act of Spanish hostility against the Allies was a necessary precaution in support of the Tangier Statute. Beigbeder, I am convinced, sincerely believed that this was the true position. When, however, the news was published in the press that Spanish troops had entered Tangier, it was accompanied by an outburst of chauvinistic triumph. The pretext that the Spanish move was a temporary expedient faded out of the picture. Instead, the Spanish troops were made to appear as the advance guard of an army that was to conquer Morocco and recreate the African Empire of Charles V. The Falange papers in particular gloated over what they claimed to be a resounding defeat of the Allies.

Comte de la Baume strongly protested against this breach of the undertaking that he had been given. I added a comprehensive protest against the Spanish action and made it clear that we maintained all our existing rights under the Tangier Statute. Beigbeder was, however, powerless. Whilst it was evident that he deeply resented the course that events had taken, he could do nothing against Serrano Suñer who controlled the press and intended to treat Tangier as a permanent part of a new Spanish Empire. The Germanophiles, and particularly Serrano Suñer, had beaten the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

This incident showed only too clearly where the real power in the Government resided. When it came to a battle between the two departments, it was the Gobernacion, with its complete control of the press and the police, that always won, and the brother-in-law, whose last word always carried the day with General Franco. The incident left a bad taste in my mouth. It was my first experience of a promise broken by the Franco Government, and my first example of the weakness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the next crisis, Colonel Beigbeder and I were more successful.

The German army reached the Spanish frontier on June 27th. Immediately afterwards, the press announced a parade of German

troops in San Sebastian for the following Sunday and subsequent visits of German detachments to other towns in Northern Spain. The German plan was based on the established Hitler technique, fraternisation on a large scale with the local garrisons, a friendly infiltration of German troops, and the gradual occupation of the whole country. Once again, there were "to be no more Pyrenees," but in 1940, unlike 1700, it was Germany and not France that was removing them.

I at once realised that if German detachments were allowed into Spain, the chances of keeping the country out of the war on the Axis side were practically gone. Spaniards were already dominated by the conviction of German invincibility. If German units had appeared over the frontier, it would have been everywhere taken for granted that the Spanish Government had accepted the inevitable and joined the winning side. The German army, so far from being resisted, would have been welcomed as a triumphant victor.

Here, then, was a test case to be fought out to the bitter end.

Our difficulties began at once. My staff and I at this critical moment had the greatest difficulty in making contact with the Minister or any of the senior officials of the Ministry. It was a Sunday in midsummer and they were all away. "No *contestá*"—"He does not answer," was the monotonous reply of the telephone exchange. It was late in the evening before Arthur Yencken made contact with one of the secretaries who promised to do his best to deal with the situation. The next morning I hurried to the Ministry and told Colonel Beigbeder with a directness unusual perhaps in diplomatic procedure that if the German marches took place, my mission would be rendered useless, and I should therefore immediately return to England. Realising at once the gravity of the issue, he assured me that he would do his utmost to frustrate the German plan.

In this case he was more successful than with the Tangier communiqué. The German parades were stopped and the military commandant in San Sebastian suspended from his post for agreeing to them.

An Allied success had been achieved. But no Allied success in Spain was ever complete. Until the German army left the Pyrenees, the effective and ultimate threat remained, and with it, the certainty of a successful German counter-offensive. On this occasion, whilst the organised parades were forbidden, the fullest latitude was given to smaller parties of Germans to cross

the frontier in uniform and to travel to and fro at their will in Northern Spain. Fortunately, however, for us these German "tourists" behaved true to type. By buying up large quantities of much-needed food and generally acting as if they were an army of occupation, they soon made themselves detested by the vigorous Basques and Navarese whose path they crossed and whose stocks they devoured.

The third urgent issue that I was forced to press upon the Minister was the anti-Ally campaign in the Spanish press.

It was difficult to believe that the newspapers of any neutral country could ever sink so low as the Spanish press in the second and third years of the war.

Some papers still retained their old names, *Ya*, *A.B.C.* and the rest. But upon them had fallen the dead hand that destroys all journalistic distinction and tradition in totalitarian countries. In Italy, this death grip had forced the life from the *Corriere della Sera*, one of Europe's greatest papers. In France, the independence of the *Temps* and the *Figaro* were already doomed by Petain's new order and Abetz's *Diktat*. Spain, however, could not plead as an excuse that its territory was occupied, or that it had become a belligerent. Yet for month after month General Franco allowed the Spanish press to act as the loudest possible speaker for German propaganda. None of the well-established papers were permitted any liberty of action. Each alike had to re-echo his master's voice. In this case the master was a very sinister eastern Jew, Lazar by name. This representative of Aryan racialism had been born a Turkish subject and had subsequently migrated to Bucharest, Buda Pesth and Vienna. In Vienna he had faithfully served Hitler as a fanatical propagandist in support of the Anschluss. Since then he had become an important figure in the Nazi world and the *eminence grise* or rather *jaune* of the German Embassy in Madrid. A mysterious figure of strange tastes. His bedroom was decorated as a chapel with two rows of twelve figures of saints and an altar upon which he slept. In spite of his repulsive appearance he was popular in a certain society of Madrid and particularly with ladies. From the German Embassy, where he had more authority than the Ambassador himself, he daily directed not only the general course of the Spanish press, but even the actual words of the news and articles. His subordinates had their desks in the Spanish offices, and not a word reached the Spanish public that had not been subject to his sinister approval. By a cunning mixture of brutal dictation and unabashed cor-

ruption, he succeeded in making the Spanish papers even more venomous than the papers actually published in Germany.

The climax was reached in August, 1940. The worst offender was the Falange paper *Arriba*, a completely unscrupulous journal that, being the party organ, monopolised the best newsprint and enjoyed an officially enforced circulation. Sneers, insults and lies were rained upon the Allied cause. Vicious cartoons appeared of Mr. Churchill. The grossest charges were made against the British Government. If Spanish carelessness led to an accident in a badly organised factory or an antiquated train, it was at once attributed to sabotage by the British Government. When I complained, Colonel Beigbeder admitted that, whilst he agreed with every word of my protest, he was powerless to stop the campaign. The press was in the hands of Serrano Suñer, and Serrano Suñer in the hands of the Axis. The only comfort that he could offer me was that, thanks¹ to Serrano Suñer and the Germans, the Spanish newspapers were not only unreadable but unread.

Up to a point his answer was accurate. A totalitarian censorship inevitably destroys the influence of individual papers. But only up to a point. For the continuous drip of poisonous propaganda sooner or later corrodes independence of judgment. Even in my own case I noticed the effect of the unchecked stream of violent abuse and tendentious lies. Without some counterblast, and at that time no British papers were on sale in Spain and no Allied communiqués allowed to be published, whilst the London papers even for the Embassy, took six or seven weeks to arrive, human nature could scarcely fail to be influenced by the unceasing attack from one side.

There was an even more serious danger in this unneutral campaign. How, I asked Colonel Beigbeder, could the Spanish Government reconcile the press attacks with General Franco's professions of non-belligerency? How was it possible to keep the peace between Great Britain and Spain while every Spanish paper was ordered by the Government to carry on a virulent campaign against us, and while British public opinion was more and more justly incensed against insults that seemed to be designed to force us into war?

Beigbeder agreed with every word that I said. But the war that had re-started in Spain was a civil war, and the two protagonists, he and Serrano Suñer, were unequally matched. Once indeed, Beigbeder succeeded in inserting in a single paper a

repudiation of Serrano Suñer's libels against us. The result was the imposition of a heavy fine on the paper and a redoubled vendetta against the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

This new civil war naturally brings me to the third of the trio whose acquaintance I was making, Ramon Serrano Suñer, General Franco's brother-in-law and, for some time to come, the mayor of the Caudillo's palace.

By birth he was a northerner born near the boundary of the provinces of Aragon and Saragossa, and by career, a lawyer who had held an official post in Saragossa and become a personality in the party of Gil Robles. Knowing, however, no loyalty except to his own ambition, he intrigued against his leader and transferred himself to the Falange movement. When General Franco came into power, his chances sensationally improved. Not only was he married to Señora de Franco's sister, but he possessed the very qualities that were most conspicuously lacking in his brother-in-law. Unlike the slow thinking and slow moving Gallego, he was as quick as a knife in word and deed. Unlike, also, most of his colleagues, he would have no nonsense of *manana*, when his interests and intentions were concerned. In appearance no less than in character he seemed a Spanish counterpart of Dryden's Shaftesbury. "Close designs and crooked counsels" were the breath of his life. Prematurely white hair, a chronic cough and a nervous twitch were evidence of the strain that he was putting "on his feeble body."

This combination of personal energy and court favour soon made him the second most powerful figure in Spain. From the controversy that raged at the end of the Civil War between the totalitarians and anti-totalitarians he emerged the undisputed victor. Count Jordana, who had resisted a policy of antarchy and fascism, was thrown out of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and Serrano Suñer's new Falange, as distinct from the Old Shirts who started the movement, became omnipotent.

Having finished his education at the Spanish College in Bologna, his views tended to Italian Fascism rather than German Nazism. With Ciano he had more in common than with Ribbentrop and, being a practising Catholic, he preferred Mussolini's relations with the Church to Hitler's anti-christian barbarism. But these were nuances in his outlook. Totalitarianism from wherever it might come was his ideal of government, liberal democracy his conception of all that was contemptible and corrupt. "Putrid liberal topics, sentimentalism,

blasphemous liberal voices," to quote the words of his party paper, *Arriba*, were the evils that he was determined to eradicate. Being Franco's Minister of the Interior and having dictatorial powers over the two most effective instruments of repression, the police and the press, he was able to stamp out any public expression of liberal doctrines, and to tie the Spanish régime more securely to the Fascist-Nazi Axis.

When I arrived in Madrid, he was swiftly reaching the zenith of his power. Whilst the internal administration of the country was directly in his hands, his influence with his brother-in-law gave him a dominating position over the whole field of government. In June, 1940, he was engaged upon a relentless campaign to supplant Beigbeder in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and by this means to be able to dictate the war policy of Spain as completely as he dictated its internal affairs.

As it was my business to know as much as I could of foes as well as friends, I took an early opportunity of visiting this chief exponent of Falange fanaticism. He received me in the Ministry of Gobernacion, the department that embraces almost every side of Spanish life. The building, only a few houses distant from the Embassy, as so often is the case in these days of expanding government activities and of shortage of office accommodation, was a block of flats. To one who, like myself, had been used to the historic offices of Whitehall, there was something incongruous in a suite of obviously domestic apartments being used as the office of a great and, in this case, grim department of state. Not far distant, as many knew who heard cries emerging from it, was another private dwelling used by the Falange police for their savage inquisitions.

When I made my visit the stairs and ante-rooms were as usual filled with waiting suitors. Life or death, liberty or imprisonment depended upon the answers to their prayers for friends and families. The armed guard at the door and the anxious crowd within gave a macabre setting to the interview in the Minister's flat.

From the first words of the conversation, it was evident that I was dealing with a fanatic, and a fanatic in bad health. He would talk of nothing but the horrors of the Civil War and the brutalities of the Reds. He and his family had undoubtedly suffered from them. He himself had been imprisoned by the Republicans, and his two brothers had been killed in Madrid. His brothers' death, that, he persistently attributed to the refusal of

the British Embassy to give him refuge. I took great pains to sift this allegation, and I found that there was no shred of evidence in support of it. Serrano Suñer, however, was not a man to be convinced against any of his rooted prejudices. Nor was it worth arguing with him about the war aims and efforts of the Allies. Long since, he had made up his mind that the democracies were decadent, corrupt and vicious and that totalitarianism was the new dispensation revealed to save the world.

This was the first of many interviews that I was to have with him during the next two years. In none of them did I notice any change or even hesitation in the attitude that he adopted towards the war in general, and Great Britain in particular.

At the time that I first saw him, his battle with Beigbeder was reaching a crisis. The cafés were already full of rumours of the Foreign Minister's impending dismissal, and the atmosphere of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was one of open war with the Gobernacion.

Beigbeder was then actively engaged upon negotiating a Spanish-Portuguese agreement, complementary to the Treaty of Friendship and Understanding ratified the previous year. This fact was sufficient for Serrano Suñer to inspire a series of press attacks on Portugal, as the ally of England, and as an integral part of the Peninsula that should once again be reabsorbed into the Spanish Empire. In spite of this hostile propaganda, Beigbeder, Dr. Salazar and Theotonio Pereira, the Portuguese Ambassador in Madrid, reached agreement and obtained General Franco's approval. Beigbeder showed me the document in its original form with the pencil notes and amendments of the negotiators written in the margin. It was to be signed that morning by General Franco and published in the press the following day. The agreement, emphasising the solidarity and amity of the two neighbours, promising non-aggression, and arranging for mutual consultation in times of difficulty, was a conspicuous victory for Beigbeder's policy. It was a definite sign that Spain wished to maintain her independence and to keep the Iberian Peninsula out of Hitler's continental system.

The Minister asked me not to report the final agreement until it was actually signed by General Franco. When, however, I rang him up many hours after the time arranged for signature, I gathered that formidable obstacles had appeared at the last moment. Serrano Suñer was in fact doing his utmost with his brother-in-law to stop the signature. Eventually, however, it was

realised that the negotiations had gone too far to be repudiated. Franco accordingly sighted the document but, contrary to the most explicit pledges given to the Portuguese Government, for a time withheld the news from the press and public. When indeed it was published, it was given no prominence and was made to appear as an affair of secondary importance.

Serrano Suñer had from his own point of view been right to make the agreement a test case. The conception behind the agreement was diametrically opposed to his policy of solidarity with the Axis. Any further association of the Spanish Government with Dr. Salazar was certain to exercise a steadying influence on General Franco's attitude.

This proved to be the case. Particularly under Count Jordana's wise direction in subsequent years, the renewal of close relations between the two Peninsular neighbours substantially helped Spain to avoid the Axis grip.

For the time being the signature of the agreement still further embittered the battle between the two Ministers. The set-back had made Serrano Suñer more than ever determined to be rid of Beigbeder.

CHAPTER FOUR

THESE INTERVIEWS and others that I had with many of the leading Ministers and public men raised in my mind a host of difficult questions. Over and above them all, was the governing issue. Was the attempt to keep Spain out of the Axis worth trying? Was it not certain to fail and were we not likely to lose more from a non-belligerent government that was fundamentally hostile than from an open and avowed enemy against whom we could use the full rigours of the blockade?

Certainly, we had ample justification to break with the Franco Government. Not a day passed without some provocation or insult. Serrano Suñer and the Falange never ceased to flaunt their solidarity with Nazism and Fascism, and their contempt for what they were pleased to call the "pluto-democracies." Certainly also, from my personal point of view, I would have been delighted to end my mission, to tell the Spanish Ministers what I thought of their attitude, and to be quit of the Serrano Suñers and all their works. But this was not a moment for hasty decisions or personal preferences. Great Britain was fighting for its very life. The Battle of Britain was not yet decided, our army was out of action, our fleet crippled by the French defection and our aircraft production only starting upon its upward curve. We were in no position to take on any new enemy, particularly a new enemy that possessed a coast line of the first strategic importance.

Any doubt on the soundness of this conclusion soon vanished before the German plan of campaign. Hitler's intentions were so blatant that no one could mistake them. By hook or by crook he was determined to embroil us with Spain. A definite breach between the British and Spanish Governments would give him a Spanish welcome and liberty of action in the Peninsula. With liberty of action he could move at will through Spain to Gibraltar, Africa and the Mediterranean. If, on the other hand, he felt that the time had not yet arrived for a march through the Peninsula, he could feel satisfied with the creation of a practically solid Axis bloc in Western Europe, and of a new threat of well-nigh irre-

sistible power against the greatly weakened British Empire, and its vital lines of communication.

The evidences of his intentions were everywhere apparent. German *agents provocateurs* were exciting anti-British demonstrations and harassing the lives of British subjects. Attempts were made to sabotage our economic negotiations. Our escaped prisoners of war were maltreated and threats made that they would be thrown back over the frontier. Insults in the press were evidently designed to drive us to a breach with the Spanish Government. This was the obvious German game and, as it was the German game, I was determined not to play it. The more aggressively, therefore, the Germans attempted to force upon us an Anglo-Spanish rupture, the more obstinately patient I showed myself in the face of provocation. It was sufficient for me to see that the Germans wished us to break off relations with the Franco Government, to advise the British Government to take the opposite course.

This was no new chapter of appeasement, still less any evidence of our support of Franco's Falangism. Rather was it a move in the military operations at their most critical moment. My advice was based not on diplomatic precedent or personal predilection, but on the hard facts of our military needs. I remembered Admiral Phillips' words before my departure from England: "Your mission is military, not diplomatic." As therefore on military grounds, it was necessary in the summer of 1940 to keep Spain non-belligerent, I consistently gave my advice on the side of patience and caution. "Let us refuse to play the German game," I said time after time. "Let us hold on in spite of provocation; let us hope that the tide of war will change, and with it, German domination in Spain. Even if it does not change, we shall gain time, and time is the raw material that we most need. The Germans are everywhere making themselves unpopular. Spanish xenophobia is increasing and is chiefly directed against them. Nine Spaniards out of ten do not want war. If the worst comes to the worst, there is still the miracle that Foch always declared may intervene in war."

The British Government readily accepted this view. Mr. Churchill and Lord Halifax, in particular, clearly grasped its full implications. They saw that it carried with it certain consequences. For instance, if we were to keep Spain out of the Axis, they realised that it was necessary for us to show that Spain would benefit by keeping out, and that we alone were in

a position to support her independence. In the summer of 1940, scarcely anyone on the continent believed that we could help ourselves, much less any other country. The fact, therefore, that we were prepared to make economic agreements with Spain was excellent propaganda as a sign of our inherent strength. The fact also that we carried them out when we made them, whilst the Germans almost always fell down on their contracts, was the best possible evidence of our powers of resistance and the security of our word.

Moreover, there were commodities in Spain that we urgently needed for our own war effort; for instance, iron ore, pyrites, potash, mercury, leather, wool and cork. There existed therefore a sound basis for an extension of our Trade Agreement of April, 1940, and an opportunity to prove to General Franco that the sterling area was safer ground than the barter jungle of the new order.

When once it was admitted that the wise course was to avoid a breach, and that economic agreements were an essential part of the policy, the question arose as to method.

Two schools of thought showed themselves. The first, was the school of the big stick. "Start with an ultimatum. Tell the Spaniards clearly that they will starve if they do not immediately accept our terms. Then, negotiate with the sword of Damocles shining conspicuously above their heads."

The second was the school of the carrot. "Look at the Allied resources of wheat, oil and rubber. You Spaniards need them very urgently. Why should we not help you to satisfy them by a sensible exchange for commodities that you possess and we require? Let us make an agreement that is mutually beneficial. You will see that when once you have agreed to our very reasonable proposals, you will reap increasingly great advantage from economic relations with the two great Anglo-Saxon powers."

It was this second school that inspired our economic negotiations in Madrid. Psychologically, it was, I am convinced, the wiser school. If you threaten a Spaniard, he becomes a mule that kicks back. If you tell him that he will starve unless he accepts your terms, he will reply that he prefers starvation to surrender. Of all people in Europe, he is the most sensitive, but the least submissive.

You may lead a Spaniard but you cannot drive him. The words of Antonio de Solis were worth remembering:

¹⁴ *La razon no quiere fuerza,
Dice un refran, y es un necio
Que con fuerza de una punada
Tiene cosas de argumento."*

The course of events was to prove over and over again the wisdom of what I will call hard-headed reasonableness as opposed to threat and dictation.

By this method, we were not only able to build up a double-track line of trade that was highly advantageous to both countries, but to create throughout Spain, and particularly in the industrial world, an economic goodwill that to a large extent counterbalanced the hostility that met us in political circles. Indeed, for the first year of my mission, it was almost exclusively in the economic field that I could make any progress. It was a field of hard bargaining, of no doles and nothing for nothing, of agreements only reached after vigorous discussion but, when once reached, of agreements that were effectively carried out. Step by step, we were thus able to build a structure of mutual interest and to create conditions in which any breach between the two countries would have meant substantial loss to Spanish commerce and industry. Time after time, this new feeling of common interest stood us in good stead. It strengthened the public opinion that was opposed to war, inspired confidence in the stability of the British Empire, and acted as a powerful preventive against the chauvinism of the Falange and the autarchical heresies of Serrano Suñer.

It was in the early months of my mission that this experiment began to take shape. Wise minds from the Treasury and the Ministry of Economic Warfare advised me in Madrid. Thanks to our combined efforts and in the teeth of the German and Falange saboteurs, we were able on July 24th to sign an agreement supplementary to the Trade Agreement of April, and to include Portugal in a tripartite arrangement for the exchange of goods through the sterling area.

Once started upon this line of economic advance, we never went back. The further moves I shall describe in later chapters. It was throughout a history, not of trade following the flag, for in 1940 our flag did not impress many Spaniards, but of the flag following trade. As our economic exchanges increased, as

¹ (Translation): Reason needs no force, 'tis said,
And a fool is he who drives
His point home with his fist.

our contracts were carried out, as our economic strength became more widely known, our political and military prestige steadily improved.

This experience has lessons for us that are not confined to the Spanish Peninsula in war time. More often than not the flag follows trade, not indeed in the physical sense of military occupation, but in the more civilised form of a prestige founded on the useful and honest exchange of our great resources.

CHAPTER FIVE

I HAVE purposely dealt in detail with the first three months of my mission. Not only were June, July and August a very critical period but in them were marked out the lines of all my future work.

Upon the whole, our fortunes had gone better than might have been expected. Our air victories in the early days of the Battle of Britain had undoubtedly stood us in good stead. They seemed, however, to have made less impression on Spain than on most other foreign countries. The Spanish army, pervaded by German doctrine, convinced of German invincibility and knowing nothing of air tactics and strategy, regarded air battles as by-play that had little or no effect on the really serious operations of war. The Ministry of Marine having no air arm knew nothing about aviation. The Minister of Air, an army general, Vigon, the most bigoted propagandist of German strength in the Government and an old man completely under the influence of Admiral Canaris, the chief of the German secret service, seemed uninterested in his own minute air force, and entirely sceptical of our victories and of the fact that air supremacy might be the crucial factor in the war. Indeed, he told me in so many words that the Battle of Britain was of no account, and that we were counting the large number of our own crashed machines in the statistics of enemy machines that we claimed to have shot down.

Only one Spaniard in authority seemed to appreciate what was happening in the air. This was the Infante Don Alfonso of Bourbon-Orleans, the holder of the first Spanish pilot's licence and now the commander of the Air Force district of Andalusia. Since my first period at the Air Ministry in 1922 he and I had been close friends. Year after year he came to the Display at Hendon, and never ceased to follow in detail the training and technical developments of the Royal Air Force. In those early days of military aviation he was one of the few who saw that the foundations that in spite of prejudiced criticism we were laying in Great Britain were capable of carrying the greatest air force in Europe.

His foresight was founded not only on the experiences of his

own flying training but also on the continuous studies of a scientific mind. It was this combination of practical and technical knowledge that made Henry Ford engage him as one of his chief representatives in Europe when the Civil War forced him to leave Spain.

It is rare to find these qualities in a royal prince. The upbringing of princes is usually and almost necessarily either amateur or conventional. Don Alfonso's family, had, however, a long tradition of originality. His grandfather was the famous Duc de Montpensier, son of Louis Philippe whose intrigues for the throne of Spain so nearly plunged Europe into war; his father, a spendthrift who dissipated a colossal fortune, and his mother, the Infanta Eulalie, whose unconventional habits and brilliantly indiscreet memoirs have made her the *enfant terrible* of the royal families of Europe.

Don Alfonso and his wife, the Infanta Beatrice, a daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, showed us constant kindness in Madrid and in their vast house at San Lucar De Barrameda. There were no two Spaniards whose brilliant conversation and varied experiences interested us more. I have described the Infante at this point because he seemed to be the only Spanish general who read correctly the lesson of the Battle of Britain.

Beigbeder reached, though from a different angle, the same conclusion that Great Britain was not beaten. With him it was our traditional power of resistance, rather than our use of the new arm that would save us. To his historical eye Dunkirk was another Corunna, and the two important facts, the saving of the British army and the integrity of the British navy. It was his knowledge of the past that convinced him that the British bull was not cornered, and might still turn and rend the *matador*. "Serrano Suñer," he told me, "has accepted Hitler's cocktail party for September 15th in London." The cynical smile with which he accompanied this sensational news concealed the contempt with which he regarded his colleague's ignorant optimism.

Perhaps it was this confidence in his own judgment that made him behave so rashly during these critical weeks. At the very moment when I was being most closely watched by the Gestapo, he went out of his way to blaze abroad his close association with me. "Don Samuel" had become his intimate friend, and the two would dine together in some Madrid restaurant or ostentatiously walk arm in arm through the crowded streets to the foyer

of the Palace Hotel, the social centre of countless Germans. I warned him of the risks that he was running. But no words of caution would deter him from showing to the world his contempt for all Germans and Germanophiles. A typical *hidalgo* indeed, with all the Spanish flouting of danger. How often did I hear of casualties in the Civil War due solely to the refusal of combatants to take any cover!

On a very hot day towards the end of September he said to me: "Let us escape from Madrid and have a walk and talk in the country." I willingly accepted. As the talk that resulted was by far the most interesting that I had yet had, I give the account in the actual words with which I described it at the time in a letter to Lord Halifax:

September 27.

"I found that Beigbeder had arranged that we should drive a few kilometres out of Madrid to a ruined villa of the Royal Family where we could talk at length and undisturbed. We certainly could not have found a more solitary spot. Leaving the car at the gate he and I walked about the deserted garden for the best part of two hours. The conversation raised certain important and urgent issues and I am, therefore, reporting it in detail.

"Colonel Beigbeder is convinced that we are on the brink of a turning point in Spanish policy. Hitherto, there have been two contending parties in the Government and the country, the party of the short war led by Serrano Suñer, and the party of the long war led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Serrano Suñer and the young men of the Falange have staked their fortunes upon the war ending this autumn and ending with a complete German victory. Colonel Beigbeder has equally staked his fortunes upon the war not ending quickly and not ending in a complete German victory. According to the Minister for Foreign Affairs there seems now an excellent chance of his own policy being confirmed and of Serrano Suñer's being discredited. If this result comes about, the Falange defeat will seem all the more crushing after the much-advertised visit of its leader to Berlin. Colonel Beigbeder added that the visit had been planned by Baron von Stohrer, the German Ambassador, for two purposes, firstly, to involve Spain in the continental bloc and, secondly, and perhaps even more important in the Ambassador's eyes, to rehabilitate von

Stohrer who had been steadily losing ground in Madrid for many weeks past.

"It will be seen from this that Colonel Beigbeder contemplates a victory over Serrano Suñer in the next few weeks. On the assumption that this takes place, what is to be the next step? Will our friends here, foremost amongst them the Minister for Foreign Affairs, be able to consolidate the ground that they will have gained? This all-important question he proceeded to discuss with me with a frankness that I cannot exaggerate. This was his argument. A long war would be not only very unpopular in Spain, it might well be disastrous. His victory over Serrano Suñer would thus be on an unpopular issue and the Germans would have ready to hand the easiest and most effective kind of propaganda. They would say that when all the continent wanted peace, Great Britain alone was continuing the war, that Spain would be finally ruined by the war and that if at the end Great Britain was victorious she would bring back the Government of the Reds. Colonel Beigbeder, seeing the great danger of propaganda of this kind, impressed upon me the vital importance of forestalling it at once, and of strengthening the hands of our potential friends in Spain. If we were to succeed, he said, we must be at once preparing the ground for action to be taken immediately after it became clear in October that the war was going on through the winter. I asked him for concrete suggestions that we could put into action without delay. His answer was 'Start immediately a steady and consistent campaign upon the B.B.C. about the economic help that you are giving to Spain. Discussions that began over oil are going well, but owing to the impossibility of getting into Serrano Suñer's newspapers you must rely upon the B.B.C. broadcasts in Spanish. Secondly, you should be ready to make a sympathetic statement as to your political relations with Spain at the right moment, also on the wireless. The statement should be designed to keep Spain out of the continental bloc and to make it clear that she can hope for a future outside it. As things are, she is being promised economic stability, Gibraltar and French Morocco if she joins the bloc. She is also threatened with every kind of catastrophe if she keeps out of it. Your statement therefore should be as sympathetic as ever you can make it to Spanish ideals and aspirations.'

"Such a statement would, in Colonel Beigbeder's view, have a very great effect upon the anti-German party in Spain. There was now in his opinion none of the anglophobia that existed in Spain two or three months ago. Xenophobia had taken its place, and xenophobia was now principally directed against the Germans. If we could at the right moment capitalise this change of opinion and make it clear that Spain had a great future outside the continental bloc, we should help to make Spain take the right turning at the cross-roads that we had now reached. Having taken this turning two things might happen on the road. The Spanish Government, supported by a more solid public opinion, might be able to stand up to future German demands. Or if it were still too weak to resist a German demand for the right of passage, it would at least have behind it a great body of national resentment that would make the way of the Germans difficult and would end as the French right of passage ended in 1808, i.e., in another Peninsular war. In either event therefore we had everything to gain by rallying the Spanish forces of xenophobia. Finally, he said that if we acted as he proposed, and we and he exploited to the full the field of closer relations between the two countries, he believed we could develop the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance into a triple alliance to cover the Iberian Peninsula. His fear, however, was that no one in London would take these possibilities either seriously enough or broadly enough to make it possible for them to be developed with the force and speed that were required. Why, he asked, did I not myself go to London to put these big issues before the Government?

"My answer was that I felt that my departure from Madrid at this moment would be so much dramatised by friends as well as enemies that it might do more harm than good. Colonel Beigbeder was, however, insistent upon this point and I feel that I must put it to you. I could, of course, take advantage of the suggestion with which, you remember, you yourself agreed some weeks ago that I should come to London. I feel, however, that I ought not to leave Madrid unless it is absolutely necessary and if you accept the views that I am now expressing it would seem better for me to remain here. If, however, you have doubts and misgivings then I feel that I ought to try to remove them by personal discussion in London.

"I now make certain comments upon this conversation.

From start to finish it was obvious to me that Colonel Beigbeder meant it to be regarded as a long step forward in our direction. It was based on the assumption that Serrano Suñer's policy of the short war would collapse in the course of the next few weeks. A further point to remember, particularly when we are apt to recall Colonel Beigbeder's tendencies to facile optimism, is that in this instance his and our fortunes are tied up together. Events have so moved that he has now so completely burnt his boats with the Germanophil party that not only his success but also his political life is involved in our success. General Franco may, of course, throw him over. Certainly General Franco's recent speeches have shown his ideological sympathy with the other dictators. None the less I hear from all sides that in the last resort he wishes to keep Spain not only out of the war, but also out of the continental bloc. Supposing, however, that he and Colonel Beigbeder are not able to play their part in fostering better relations between our two countries, it does not seem to me that we can lose anything by carrying out the two concrete proposals that I am making, namely, an intensive wireless campaign of economic propaganda and at the end of it a public statement of sympathy with Spain? Any promises that we make or any economic help that we might give would be entirely dependent upon a friendly Spain. This being so, it seems to me that there is very little risk involved in the action that I am recommending. I must emphasise, however, that it must be in the first instance be unilateral action on our part. One thing that we cannot do with the Spanish Government is to impose upon them certain preliminary conditions. If, for instance we say to them, 'You must stop the German propaganda in the press before we can make any statement of sympathy towards Spain,' we are making a condition that they cannot carry out and which if they did carry out, might even react disastrously against our own interests. With the Germans on the Pyrenees they would be afraid to fulfil it and it is quite possible that if they made the attempt to fulfil it, the immediate result would be a German ultimatum demanding the right of passage. You may think that this is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. I agree, but I fear it is inherent in a situation in which German tanks and aeroplanes are on the frontier.

"Let me now summarise in a sentence or two the issues

that are at stake and the action that I recommend. The issues are three:

"*Firstly*, the strengthening of the hands of Colonel Beigbeder and his colleagues in the Cabinet who are opposed to the Germanophil policy of Serrano Suñer.

"*Secondly*, a rallying point for the growing body of opinion in Spain that is opposed to German domination. If this body of opinion can be consolidated and increased, any German ultimatum will burst upon a hostile and resentful Spain, and the events of 1808 may be repeated. Out of this situation may eventually develop a triple alliance covering the Iberian Peninsula.

"*Thirdly*, Spain can still in my view, be kept out of the continental bloc. As things are, the Iberian Peninsula is the last corner of continental Europe outside the continental bloc. It seems to me vitally important for us to maintain this independence if for no other purpose than to keep it as a card of re-entry, military, economic or political, into Europe. Spain, moreover, is looking more and more to the Atlantic and less and less to the Mediterranean. Being on our lines of communication, having an Atlantic rather than a continental outlook, being at the same time a jealous rival of Italy and a very suspicious neighbour of Germany, Spain seems to me to offer us to-day chances that do not exist in any other part of the continent."

It will be seen from this account how intimate were the relations between Beigbeder and myself, and how completely he had come over to the Allied side. What might have been the subsequent developments, if he had remained in office, we can only imagine. For he was already a doomed man. The completeness of his conversion and the panache that he waved over it had delivered him into the German hands. Serrano Suñer's opportunity had come. Franco, who habitually suppressed all independent ministers except his brother-in-law, could not permit his Minister for Foreign Affairs to proclaim his confidence in a corrupt and decadent England. Any hesitation that he may have had was dissipated by Serrano Suñer who had just returned from Berlin where Hitler had told him that "as Beigbeder had sold himself to Sir Samuel Hoare, he must go." Beigbeder's fate was doubly sealed.

There then followed a typical series of events. Franco being

a Gallego would never move without carefully surveying the ground on all sides, and then only step by step. The first stage in the elimination of a minister or a general was invariably a campaign of press propaganda and inspired rumour. Attacks, subtle at first and if necessary, brutal afterwards, would be sedulously circulated against the appointed victim. The world would by this means become habituated to the idea of his disappearance. Indeed, his resignation or dismissal would be assumed weeks and perhaps months before it actually took place. When, therefore, it was finally announced, it was considered stale news of no interest to the world, and no revulsion of feeling took place in the victim's favour.

So it was in Beigbeder's case. For several weeks Madrid rang with stories of his dismissal. It was not, however, until October 17th that it was actually confirmed.

There was another typical feature about it. In the true manner of dictators Franco never mentioned his intention to Beigbeder himself. The first that the Minister knew of his dismissal was when he read it in the newspapers on the morning of October 17th. On the evening of October 15th he had had a long and apparently friendly interview with the Caudillo. No word of criticism was said of the Minister's policy, no suggestion made that any change was in contemplation. Beigbeder left the Pardo with a feeling of encouragement. When I saw him on the next day, he was convinced that his enemies had failed in their attempt to get rid of him. Twelve hours later came the short and abrupt paragraph in the press to the effect that he had ceased to be Minister for Foreign Affairs and that Serrano Suñer had succeeded him.

This was not my first experience of the dismissal of a Minister for Foreign Affairs by an autocrat. Another Foreign Minister with whom I had been a close friend was Sazonov in the days when I was in Russia. Sazonov, like Beigbeder, was a friend of England and an enemy of Germany. He also had an apparently satisfactory interview with the Emperor. He also came away with the conviction that his policy had been endorsed. He also for the first time heard of his dismissal when he read the morning paper. In his case also his chief enemy, the Germanophil Stürmer, was his successor.

Only dictators can use these furtive and treacherous methods. Where public opinion is free and parliamentary government exists, the dismissal of an important minister can seldom take

place without the clash of controversy, and the exchange of charge and counter-charge. Letters are published that show the causes of the change. Questions are asked in Parliament. The departing minister in accordance with precedent states his case in one or other House.

These are the public reverberations of such a change. But there are also personal aspects of it that are scarcely less important. The head of the government, if he is fit to hold his place, frankly explains the position to his colleague and warns him of his impending departure. When the news is published, it comes not as a sudden stab in the back, but as the official confirmation of what the minister already knows. Such indeed is the code of behaviour in reputable governments. In the Franco régime there were no such rules of conduct. The Caudillo, never quick at argument, preferred a method of dismissal that did not involve him in embarrassing discussion.

It can well be imagined how deeply Beigbeder felt not only his dismissal but also the manner of it. I at once wrote him the following letter:

October 17th, 1940.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"It would not be right for me to comment on the political aspect of the changes in the Spanish Government. I can, however, say that on personal grounds I am deeply grieved that the months of friendly co-operation between us have come to an end. You have always upheld the rights and interests of your great country and I have acted in the same spirit for Great Britain. This frankness between us has led to a better understanding of Spanish and British problems. I am indeed grateful to you for the patience and kindness with which you have always listened to me. I must now wish you success and happiness in any new post that you may fill and I express the hope that although our official relations may have ceased, our personal friendship will long continue.

"Your very sincere friend,

"SAMUEL HOARE."

A discreet letter, it will be noticed. I feared, that anything that I wrote might fall into hostile hands and endanger my friend's life or liberty. I visited him the same evening in his official residence. There I found him alone with his aide-de-camp,

the Duke of Veragua, the head of the Columbus family and one of his most faithful friends. Beigbeder looked haggard and distraught. Apart from the defeat of his far-seeing policy he would not have been human if he had not deeply resented the victory of his vindictive rival and the hated Falange. Many of his friends were convinced that his life was in danger. It may well have been so. The Falange gunmen had no scruples or restraints. I implored him to be cautious and took leave of him with a deep feeling of gratitude for the encouragement that he had given me in the dark hour of our fortunes, and of regret for the loss of a good friend and sympathetic colleague.

CHAPTER SIX

I WAS NOW faced with a grim prospect. Hitherto, the Foreign Minister with whom I had been dealing had been a convinced friend of the Allies. Now his place had been taken by the man who was not only his irreconcilable enemy, but was at the same time the moving spirit of the Falange and the leader of the Axis party in Spain. To make matters worse, the well-known intimacy between Beigbeder and myself made it very unlikely that I should be able to exercise any influence over his vindictive and hostile successor.

The war was still in a very critical condition. It was not yet clear that the invasion of Britain had been abandoned. The Italian fleet and air force constituted a threat in the Mediterranean that judged by paper strength seemed very formidable, whilst the partial occupation of Roumania had shown that the door to the Balkans and Egypt was already ajar.

In Madrid, I had been able to maintain a precarious front that mainly depended on my own confident assertions and Beigbeder's friendship. A new chapter was opening in which military achievements would have to take the place of repeated bluff, and in the meanwhile my chief support in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been knocked from under my feet.

Was it possible in these conditions for me to remain in Madrid? Would it not be better in all respects that a new ambassador, less involved in the Beigbeder dispensation, should deal with the new minister? These questions I put to myself and to Lord Halifax. With me, the scale came down on the side of leaving Madrid; with him, in favour of my staying. My own staff also wished me to remain, and accordingly I agreed to try my hand with the new minister.

The chapter started under grave difficulties. If you are effectively to influence an opponent, you must have constant access to him. No one either in the diplomatic corps or even in his own ministry, had any regular access to Serrano Suñer. Although he had become Minister for Foreign Affairs at a moment that needed his undivided attention to the daily problems of the war, he still remained Vice-President of the Falange, with Franco as President, and President of the Junta, its executive committee. It is true that he retired *de jure* from the Ministry of

the Interior but *de facto* he still controlled it, as Franco appointed no successor in his place and left the police and the press in his hands. As a result, he was seldom at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and then only for hurried intervals.

His introduction to the department was ominous. Having assembled the staff he told them that he intended to break with all former traditions and to substitute new men and new methods. The change immediately showed itself in an army of blue-shirted and heavily armed Falangistas who took over the guard of the office. One of them, whom I afterwards discovered to be an escaped murderer and an enemy spy, usually sat with the private secretaries in the room adjoining the minister's. This individual's career is worth mentioning. He had started life as a beggar. After being involved in a charge of murder he joined the Falange and had been one of the six Falangistas condemned to death in the Hedilla plot against Franco. His sentence was commuted to imprisonment and subsequently remitted as a reward for the part that he took in repressing a prison mutiny at Pampeluna. Serrano Suñer was for some reason attracted to him, and although he was practically illiterate, gave him the important post of Secretary of the Institute of Political Studies. The man subsequently crossed our path on several occasions as a notorious spy, first in German and then in Japanese pay. These details are worth recording as they show the type of men whom Serrano Suñer had gathered round him.

With Serrano Suñer himself frequently at the Pardo with his brother-in-law, or the party headquarters of the Falange or the Ministry of the Interior, the centralised machine of the Foreign Office came to a virtual standstill. No one knew when the minister would be there. Papers would be put aside for his approval, and then lost before it could be obtained. The departmental registry became an *oubliette* from which nothing emerged.

As a last straw to break his officials' backs, he had caught the dictator's passion for ceremonial visits. The infection came out violently in his journeys to Berlin and Rome that began on September 16th when he was still Minister of the Interior and ended ten days later. His vanity was flattered by the pomp and circumstance of state travel. Blue, brown and black shirts acclaimed him. In Berlin he had been able to persuade Himmler to make a return visit to Madrid and give him expert advice on the liquidation of opponents and the capture of political refugees. In Rome he had not been so happy. Although he found much in

common with Ciano, he left the city under a cloud. Whether by intention or inadvertence he had failed to pay his respects to the Pope. The Vatican, the fortress of diplomatic precedent and correct behaviour, never forgot the slight that had been inflicted upon the Holy Father by this Minister of Catholic Spain.

So much for his visits when he was still in the Ministry of the Interior. Now that he was Foreign Minister, he was able to redouble them with added *éclat*. Within a few days of his entry into the Foreign Office, he was with Franco at the meeting with Hitler on the French frontier. The middle of November found him in Paris with Abetz. Two days later he was with Ciano paying homage to the Führer at Berchtesgaden.

In the meantime ambassadors and officials waited anxiously at Madrid for the interviews that they urgently required. The American Ambassador and I had very important economic questions to discuss with the Spanish Government. Yet, days and weeks passed when the minister was away from his office.

During the first world war, in Italy I had known a general who because he was always on the move and never within reach was known as "Il Generale Già Partito." I had now found his twin in the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

No doubt it was this life of continuous movement and excitement that explained Serrano Suñer's extreme irritability. Upon many occasions he seemed determined to provoke me into a final breach.

In these early months of his term of office there were three inflammable questions that were constantly bursting into flames—the treatment of our escaped prisoners of war, the persecution of British subjects in Spain, and the Spanish seizure of Tangier. Each of them had within it the ingredients of a conflagration. Serrano Suñer seemed to delight in throwing sparks into the explosive.

The first battle came over escaped prisoners of war.

British military personnel had begun to reach the Spanish frontier in small numbers at the end of August when Serrano Suñer was still at the Ministry of the Interior. It was almost by chance that I heard of the first party. A scrap of dirty paper was smuggled out of Figueras prison with a message on it that British soldiers were confined inside. I at once demanded that a British consul should visit them. There, then, started a game of hide-and-seek that was to last for years. The answer that I received and that was afterwards repeated to me upon many later occasions when

prisoners arrived was usually the same, "We know of no such personnel." Then would come a request from the Spanish Government for the names, and when we gave them, a denial that any one in prison answered to them. This part of the game they played with particular zest in the autumn of 1940 in the case of Lord Cardigan, whose three-fold description under the names of Cardigan, Brudenell and Bruce provided a unique opportunity for official equivocation. Forced eventually to admit the presence of the individuals, the final line of resistance would be a demand that we should prove that they were escaped prisoners of war and that under international law they should be freed. "How do we know," they said, "that these men are not really Red revolutionaries? Even if they are not, they are criminals under Spanish law. They have entered Spain with out passports and visas and are consequently liable to heavy fines and long terms of imprisonment." Behind all these subterfuges was of course the Gestapo, in and out of the frontier and the prisons and guard-rooms along it, corrupting and dominating the frontier patrols, dictating to prison governors and controlling police headquarters in Madrid. "Hand these men over to us," stormed the Germans. "You run a grave risk by allowing them into Spain." "Give them up to us," I insisted with no less force. "If you do not, you will be pilloried not only as the enemies of the Allies but as the enemies of all humanity."

The full course of the battle I shall describe at greater length in another chapter. It is sufficient to say at this point that sooner or later we succeeded in freeing every British prisoner who escaped into Spain, and many thousands of Allied personnel besides. No British prisoner was handed back to the Germans though in one case a British soldier brought to Madrid was already on the point of being forced into a train to take him back to Irun for surrender to the Gestapo when we successfully intervened.

Sometimes the delays and obstacles placed in our way forced us to take our own action. One cutting out expedition I particularly remember when we rescued from the French side of the frontier a very important Air Force officer, now an Air Marshal and safely deposited him in Gibraltar.

During these early negotiations over a question that constantly remained with me until the German army left the frontier in August, 1944, I had ample opportunity of realising the incredible lack of co-operation between the departments of government in Madrid.

The question of prisoners of war concerned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of War and the Ministry of the Interior. Each of them was acutely jealous of the other. Between the Ministers there was no bond of cabinet responsibility and between the departments little or no physical contact. Indeed, messages passed between them not by word of mouth but by telegram. As the Ministry of the Interior usually had the last word in questions of this kind, it can well be imagined that with Serrano Suñer rushing about Europe and at the same time insisting on nothing happening without his approval, it seemed often impossible to obtain any action even on matters of the most extreme urgency.

This was particularly the case with the many questions involving the British community in Spain. The Falange and the Germans were obviously determined to treat British subjects as the Jews and Moors had been treated in earlier centuries, and to expel them from Spain. The community that had been greatly reduced by the Civil War and its consequences numbered about a thousand at the time that I went to Spain. The men and women who had remained in the country were for the most part residents of many years' standing whose very existence was tied up with their Spanish activities and avocations. They were not particularly interested in Spanish politics and if they had a bias, it was to the side of the Nationalists who had restored some kind of order in such cities as Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao and Valencia. From the point of view of the Spanish Government they were a body of useful foreigners to be encouraged rather than persecuted. Strangers, however, in a totalitarian state are never safe. They have businesses that their native rivals wish to appropriate. If they remain in the country, they are an alien element distinct from the uniform mass of the national state. If, as in the case of the British community in Spain, they are citizens of a free country, their very presence recalls the memory of liberties that the Falange was determined to destroy.

All the material therefore was ready for the Gestapo. The campaign only needed to be started for the Falange to take it up from one end of Spain to the other. The weapon to be used was secret and anonymous denunciation. A British subject who owned a profitable business or an enviable property would be marked down for expulsion. The local police or the Seguridad, the Scotland Yard of Madrid, would then receive an anonymous denunciation, and an order of expulsion would be issued against

the British subject. As a rule, I heard of the plot in time. In that case, my staff and I would besiege the Ministry with protests, and in the last resort I would obtain an interview with the Minister to demand justice. Indeed, in connection with one of these cases that I shall describe later, I made myself sixteen personal visits to the Minister. As a rule, we received a stereotyped answer. "You are altogether wrong in thinking that this man is being expelled because he is a British subject. Whilst we cannot divulge the details of his dossier, we can assure you that he is a most dangerous and immoral person. It is absolutely necessary in the interests of order and security that he should at once be expelled from Spain." When we asked to see the dossier, our request was refused. None the less, we sometimes succeeded with the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in obtaining a reprieve. We then had to maintain our pressure, the Government playing all the time a game of cross-questions and crooked answers between the three interested departments, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of War. This inter-departmental battle led to remarkable incongruities. A well-known British subject who had lived for ten years near San Sebastian and who during the Civil War had saved many Nationalist lives suddenly received an order of immediate expulsion. By a curious coincidence the order arrived on the morrow of a banquet that had been given him by a party of Spanish notables whom he had rescued, and on the actual day that he had been notified that in recognition of his great services to Spain he had been awarded the order of Isabella the Catholic.

Incidents such as this exposed the incompatibility of temper between the rival ministries, and often gave us the chance of driving a wedge between them and having an order postponed. Seldom, however, even in spite of the strongest evidence of innocence could we obtain an actual cancellation. The possibility of expulsion therefore continued to hang over the British subject, to be actively revived from time to time in the future according as the fortunes of the Falange were or were not in the ascendant. The effect of this persecution on the British community was very depressing. Inadequately informed about the course of the war, isolated from their friends in Britain, continuously threatened and blackmailed by Falange officials, they scarcely dared call their lives their own.

In addition, therefore, to fighting their battle with Serrano Suñer, it was urgently necessary for me to strengthen the British

morale. Between our arrival and the end of the year Lady Templewood and I made several visits to such centres as Barcelona, Bilbao and Seville for the purpose of comforting and encouraging the British colonies.

Serrano Suñer I found systematically unsympathetic to my complaints. It was clear that he wished to rid Spain of all British citizens. If we succeeded in stopping a general expulsion it was only because of our persistent importunity that eventually wearied him into reluctant acquiescence.

The third question between us was equally inflammable. Whilst it also affected British subjects, it was chiefly dangerous as a flagrant case of Falange chauvinism. When Spanish troops entered Tangier on June 14th, the Allies were assured by the Spanish Government that the international status of the zone would be respected. As long as Beigbeder remained in office, this undertaking was respected. Serrano Suñer's advent to the Foreign Ministry completely reversed the Spanish attitude. Diplomatic promises, even diplomatic discussions formed no part of the new order. The strong arm and the accomplished fact were all that mattered in his totalitarian dispensation.

It was not necessary to wait long for the new methods of foreign policy to appear. On November 4th, rather less than a fortnight after his appearance in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Spanish authorities, military and civil, ostentatiously and aggressively repudiated the international régime, abolished the international machinery and assumed control of the zone. This act of aggression took place at the very moment when we had reached a critical point in certain economic negotiations that the Germans were determined to sabotage. Serrano Suñer, therefore, could feel that he was killing two Allied birds with one stone, Allied influence in Tangier, and an economic agreement with the Allied powers.

His hostile action created a very awkward crisis. In November, 1940, we had no troops available for turning the Spaniards out of Tangier. Nor did we wish at that time to have trouble in Morocco that might well have brought Hitler through a friendly Spain to the African continent.

The British Government, therefore, contented itself with a strong protest and a formal statement, refusing to accept the Spanish action as in any way changing the permanent status of the zone or the rights of Great Britain, as a signatory of the international Statute under which it was governed. I was at the

same time instructed to arrange a *modus vivendi* for British interests during the period of this illegal occupation.

As a result, there started in Madrid an almost interminable negotiation for a working arrangement. Major Gascoigne, our admirable Consul General in Tangier, and a party of leading British residents in the zone, came to Madrid to help us in the discussions. Yencken from my side plunged into them with all the indefatigable industry and obstinacy that always marked his efforts on behalf of British interests. On their side, the Spanish Government were assisted by their chief civil administrator from Tangier—an extreme and bigoted Falangista. Week after week the wrangle continued. Draft after draft was prepared only to be set aside almost immediately by Serrano Suñer. At last a document was accepted, badly drafted, it is true, for it had been subjected to every kind of amendment and reservation, but none the less guaranteeing our fundamental rights—the non-fortification of the zone, the continuance of our capitalations in the Spanish zone, the privileges of the Mixed Court for the trial of cases in which British personnel was involved, the continued publication of the British paper, the existence of the British Post Office, the free entry and departure of British subjects, and compensation equal to three years' salary for the dismissed British personnel.

This result was a remarkable victory for our negotiators. Indeed, we had obtained by our persistence incomparably better terms than any of our Allies. We had still, however, to see that they were carried out by the Spanish Government. Our troubles were far from ended, and it needed many months of incessant pressure to obtain the money for the officials' compensation, and years of watching and protesting to save the bare bones of our other rights.

Be this as it may, we had not come badly out of the Tangier battle, and at the end of the year Serrano Suñer's intended triumph had been shorn of some at least of its glory.

CHAPTER SEVEN

I MUST NOW turn aside from the problems of Spain to the no less baffling problems of France.

When the British Ambassador left Bordeaux on the night of June 22nd, we were left with no authoritative representative in France. Almost immediately afterwards he was followed by the consuls and minor diplomatic staff. Thenceforth any relations that we had with the Pétain Government were carried on either by unofficial Frenchmen in London or through the British and French Embassies in Madrid. Madrid thus became a clearing house for French information and Anglo-French discussions, just as Spain had become a focal point in the French negotiations for the armistice. It was Lequerica, the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, who acted as the intermediary for the French Government in transmitting to the Germans the request for an armistice. Beigbeder was in constant communication with him from Madrid. Indeed, I was in his room when he was instructing him on the telephone to accept the French request. French news reached Madrid as soon as it reached Paris, and sometimes even more quickly. The armistice was common talk in the Ritz restaurant several hours before it was publicly announced in France. French refugees were already crossing the Pyrenees in large numbers, whilst the French Embassy possessed an exceptional knowledge of Pétain through the Counsellor who had been his confidential secretary during his mission to Spain.

The French Ambassador, Comte de la Baume, was a highly trained diplomat in the best tradition of the *Quai d'Orsay*. By some of our own officials he was remembered for a conscientiousness that sometimes seemed almost obstructive. I found in him nothing but willingness to co-operate with me.

The French collapse struck him at a particularly tragic moment. He had recently lost one son in the Norwegian campaign, and another, a pilot, had flown off, he knew not where, to join the Resistance movement, whilst one of his daughters was seriously ill. Yet, inspite of these calamities, national and personal, he kept up his courage, and with unshaken dignity maintained his prestige as the representative of a great power. He and I saw much of each other in those dark days of June, July

and August. One meeting I remember with poignant emotion. It was at the Mass of Intercession on the day following the armistice when his family, my wife and I united our prayers for comfort to suffering France and strength for her final recovery.

Whilst the question of Tangier kept us closely together, the affair of Oran, or as the French called it, Mers-el-Kebir, created a situation that but for our joint determination to concentrate our efforts on beating the Germans might well have meant a breach in our common front.

To both of us the news of Oran came as a sudden shock. When I had been First Lord of the Admiralty, I had known Darlan and several of the senior officers of the French Marine, and I found it difficult to believe that they would ever allow their fleet to fall into German hands. I had not then talked with our naval officers who had taken part in the affair at Oran, Admiral Somerville, Admiral North, Captain Holland and others, nor could I know anything of Darlan's sudden change of mind that in a few hours had turned him into one of our most bitter enemies. Some days later, a Frenchman explained to me that the real reason for the volte-face was his overmastering ambition. Determined to be dictator of France, he could not endure a rival in General de Gaulle, or the loss of power that he would suffer if the French fleet passed out of the control under which he held it in French ports. And so this florid, dapper little officer, unimpressive both in manner and appearance, became a sinister figure of intrigue in the midst of a great world crisis.

Perhaps the following extracts from two of my letters at the time will most vividly explain both the immediate reactions in Spain and my more considered conclusions on a very distressing incident.

TO LORD HALIFAX.

8th July, 1940.

"You may like to have my impressions upon the Oran affair. There is no doubt about it. It has been a great shock to Spanish opinion. The Spaniards were still hoping against hope that the war was going to end, and the sinking of the French ships has once and for all, as it seems to them, in a brutal way destroyed all these hopes. Secondly, there has been growing up here a feeling in favour of a Latin bloc. Two factors have tended to create this feeling. In the first place, the fear of a complete German domination over the Latin

racés, and secondly, the satisfaction that, now that France appears to be going Fascist, the three Latin countries, will have the same system of government. This blow against France, and particularly against the French Navy, has upset the many people who were beginning to think upon this Latin bloc line. My conclusion would be that so far as Spain is concerned, we may get away with it, provided that our action is really justified by success. By this I mean that we have really captured, immobilised or destroyed the effective part of the French fleet. If we cannot point to successful results, Spain will regard it as a mad dog act against one of the Latin countries. I tell you this not with the intention of suggesting that we ought not to have taken this action, but to warn you that it has brought us into some dangerous Spanish waters."

TO MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL.

22nd July, 1940.

"The shock over Oran is beginning to die down. There is still, however, a good deal of bitterness on two points. First, people here think that we ought not to have withdrawn the Mission from Bordeaux and that if Campbell had stayed he would have been able to influence Pétain. Secondly, they think that any operations that were taken ought to have been finished off in a few hours. . . ."

As the weeks passed, the interest did die down. In spite of a poisonous campaign in the Spanish press, there were no serious reactions. Gibraltar was not attacked by French aircraft. Public attention had already been turned to the air battles over England. After a few weeks Oran was almost forgotten.

Suddenly, however, the trouble flared up again. On September 11th I received late in the evening a message from Beigbeder asking me to visit him at once. When I arrived, he told me very confidentially that a squadron of three French cruisers and three large destroyers had left Toulon on September 9th and were on the point of passing the Straits of Gibraltar. He gave me this information as a friend, leaving it to me to draw my own conclusions and to take what action I thought fit. As there was not a minute to be lost, I thanked him for the news and at once went to the Embassy where I telegraphed it to Gibraltar. What subsequently happened is a part of the naval history of the war, and not of these memoirs. From the Madrid angle it seemed as

if the London reaction was disappointingly slow.¹ In any case, the French ships passed the Straits without interference and four of them by reaching their destination were to a large extent responsible for the next serious crisis in our relations with the French, the affair of Dakar.

I had been confidentially informed of the Dakar plan. It was obviously one of those risky operations of war that are justified by success and condemned by failure. It failed, and its failure was not a little due to the fact that it had been forestalled by the arrival of the French squadron with guns and reinforcements.

Here again, I give an extract from a letter to Lord Halifax that explains the situation in Madrid:

TO LORD HALIFAX.

26th September, 1940.

"I am very much bewildered by what has been happening at Dakar and perhaps you could send me a line some time to give me the background of it all. The affair at present has had one very bad effect, for it has seemed to show once again our incapacity for carrying through any military plan. On the other hand, I have been making the most of the argument that the incident shows our desire to avoid intervention except where it is the obvious will of the population. This latter argument goes some way to reassure the Spaniards that we are not contemplating any intervention in Morocco.

"I find it very difficult to know how to behave to the French Ambassador when from time to time he asks to see me. You have told me once or twice to keep the ball moving between the French and British Governments, and not to bring our relations to a stop. This I have done, but it has meant a very difficult feat of balancing that may come to an abrupt end at any moment. The worst part of Dakar from this end is that it has brought the war over Gibraltar, the very point from which we wish to keep it. However, if there are no more French raids there, the affair may blow over."

It was amidst these anxieties that I was instructed to hold discussions with the French Ambassador in Madrid upon the possibility of a provisional *modus vivendi* between our two governments.

¹ I have subsequently learnt that we had no ships available at the time to intercept the French Squadron.

It will be seen from the papers published by the British Government on July 13th, 1945, how exceedingly delicate was the position. On our side, we were convinced that if the French fleet remained within reach of the Germans, no amount of paper promises would stop them from seizing it at their pleasure. We were no less conscious of the vital importance of keeping the Germans out of Africa, and of supporting the de Gaulle resistance movement wherever it struck root. On the Vichy side, there was the bitter resentment of the French navy over Oran and Dakar, and Darlan's fierce jealousy of General de Gaulle. The overriding fact, however, was that as the Vichy Government was not a free agent, the Germans would certainly have the last word over any written agreement that might be made between the French and ourselves.

It can well be imagined how difficult it was to feel my way through these obscurities, divergences and risks. Being isolated in Madrid, my impressions might well be based on inadequate knowledge. In any case, this is how I expressed them in a letter to Lord Beaverbrook on October 7th. I quote it as it accurately described my state of mind at that time:

"I wish that you would give your subtle mind to the difficult problem of our relations with the Vichy Government. At the present moment I am being used as the principal channel for communications with it and I own I am completely baffled as to what London wants. Do we wish to keep Pétain or do we wish to destroy him and his government? I have not the least idea as to what the answer is to these questions. My own view, based upon constant interviews with people in and out of occupied and unoccupied France, is that we had much better pretend that Pétain is still alive and allow the strong currents of anti-German feeling in France to gather strength behind his mummy. If we do not do this, we shall see occupied France treated like Czecho-Slovakia and have more incidents like Dakar in which British and French ships will destroy each other, although I am convinced that if we play our hand properly we shall have the French in with us again before the war ends."

Comte de la Baume, who was unreservedly in favour of a working arrangement with us, had the additional difficulty that his own government was deeply divided. The impression that

he gave me was that of the Marshal convinced that he had been marked out by heaven to save France, and that this being so, he was a law unto himself, of Darlan and Laval detesting each other with only one feeling in common, their hatred of England, and Baudoin, the Foreign Minister, anxious somehow or other to avoid a breach either with the Germans or us. With this obscure and conflicting background the Ambassador could never obtain clear answers to the questions that were raised in our conversations and often had to wait weeks for any answer at all.

The divisions in the French ranks were continually appearing. On September 26th, for example, the French naval attaché gave my naval attaché a message that amounted to an immediate ultimatum. It was to the effect that it had been decided by Vichy to re-take the dissident colonies and use the French navy for convoying French merchant ships. If we intervened there would be a state of war between the two countries. That was no doubt the voice of Darlan. The next day, however, the Ambassador, presumably under instructions from Baudoin, had a long interview with me with the object of improving relations between us by means of an economic understanding. If, he said, we would allow unoccupied France, that then seemed to be on the verge of starvation, to maintain a limited trade with North Africa, the French Government would give whatever guarantee we needed against the re-export of African imports to Germany, and provided that we did not attempt to seize other colonies of the French Empire, would for the time being refrain from any further action for the recovery of the de Gaulle territories. He added significantly that this message was very different from that given by his naval attaché on the previous day.

Having made it clear that there could be no discussion on the basis of the naval attaché's threats I told the Ambassador that whilst I would of course transmit his proposal to London, I was doubtful whether in view of the likelihood of a total occupation of France by Hitler, and of Laval's undisguised desire for an Anglo-French rupture, anything useful would result from our discussions. Lord Halifax took the same view, but agreed that in the circumstances it was wise to try out the talks.

The discussion in Madrid therefore continued. So also for greater security and pending a problematical agreement did the British blockade.

In the meanwhile, although I had pressed for explicit proposals from the French side, no answer came until October 16th when

I was given a note drafted in a legalistic and unfriendly style but ending with a declaration in favour of a *modus vivendi*. The British Government replied by again making it clear that we intended to continue our support of General de Gaulle and to maintain the blockade, and that only on this basis were we prepared to consider concrete proposals for an economic agreement. To quote the words of the telegram that I received on October 19th, and that has subsequently been published in the British White Paper:

"If the above points are clearly understood on the French side, His Majesty's Government are willing that discussions should begin at once at Madrid. We would suggest that the question of trade between North Africa (including the Atlantic ports of French Morocco) and ports in unoccupied France should be first reviewed, and we would be glad to examine any concrete proposals which the French Government may wish to put forward.

"We think it well to pursue this exchange of views with the Vichy Government in the hope that they will find it to their interest to reach an accommodation with us. We realise that they are under the German heel and they cannot be regarded as free agents in anything that they do. We can hardly expect to receive assurances in writing from them which would not be approved by the Germans, and they have so far given us little ground for confidence in any oral assurances they may give us. But there is no other basis on which we can proceed, given the position in which they find themselves. The one safeguard we have is that if they go back on their undertakings we can regard any arrangement we make with them as void and withdraw any advantages we have accorded to them."

There then followed three weeks of inconclusive discussions in Madrid, culminating in Laval's capture of the Vichy Government, and de la Baume's recall.

Although I persistently pressed for an answer to the concrete proposals that we had been given to expect from the French side, no word was forthcoming from Vichy. What, however, was clear was the growing influence of Laval in the French Government. General Weygand had been conveniently relegated to Africa, and a meeting arranged between the Marshal and Hitler for October

24th at Montoire. It was in these critical circumstances that I suggested a personal appeal to Pétain before the armistice had been finally transformed into Franco-German collaboration. This was the origin of the King's letter to the Marshal on October 25th, transmitted by me to Comte de la Baume, and the almost simultaneous appeal from President Roosevelt.

The Marshal's reply did not arrive in Madrid until November 2nd. It was curt to the point of unfriendliness, and altogether unsatisfactory. Laval who a few days before had displaced Baudoin in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had obviously inspired it. The Marshal had himself provided the preface in his broadcast of October 30th in favour of collaboration. Whether indeed he understood what he was saying, I am doubtful. Many Frenchmen had told me of his isolation from the conduct of affairs and his incapacity for any sustained thought or work. "We must remember," I wrote to Lord Halifax on November 1st, "that he is a very old man whose mind is only lucid for a few hours in the day and that he is obsessed with certain overruling ideas, one of them being to get the two million prisoners freed, the other being his almost medieval dislike of anything to do with democracy."

It was not surprising that in these circumstances Comte de la Baume fell a victim to the Laval régime. The Ambassador had been too faithful a friend of the Allied cause, whilst his intimate relations with me conspicuously marked him out as an enemy to be eliminated. His departure inevitably brought to an end any chance of profitable negotiations in Madrid. His place was taken by Monsieur Piétri, whom I had formerly known as Minister of Marine. But although for a time we occasionally saw each other, it was clear to me that Laval had no intention of making any working agreement with us, and that the French Embassy in Madrid had henceforth little influence on the course of events.

The scene of economic discussions therefore was transferred to London where from time to time unofficial agents attempted without success to stick together the pieces that Laval had intentionally left in fragments.

If, however, we had failed in our chief objective, we had gained time, and Hitler had missed a chance that was never to recur of seizing the French fleet and its African bases.

The importance of the French fleet could not be exaggerated. It was essential to our very existence and no less to the future

recovery of a free France that it should not fall under German control. That was the governing condition in those critical days. In Madrid I grasped it as firmly as the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary in London. Neither they nor I ever lost sight of this central objective with its essential corollary that the Germans must be prevented from obtaining French bases in Africa. The only question was how best to achieve it. Everything in France was in a state of chaos. The resistance movement was as yet in its infancy, and opinions were divided amongst those who knew best, between support of a policy of cautious experiment with the Marshal and a policy of root and branch rupture with Vichy.

The British Government, strongly supported by the American Embassy in Vichy, adopted the view that it was too soon to make a final judgment and that the risk of the capture of the French fleet was so menacing that it was necessary to try further discussion and negotiation. At the best, a carefully controlled measure of contact might, it was thought, strengthen the resistance forces in France, and at the worst, enable us to know something of what was happening in Vichy and gain time at a moment when time was a treasure of priceless worth.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE COMBINATION of the abortive French discussions with the continuous provocations caused by Serrano Suñer's behaviour at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made the autumn and winter of 1940 a very trying chapter of my life.

Moreover, there always lurked behind the day-to-day irritations a very formidable and disturbing question. Was Franco going to join the Axis? No one in Spain, perhaps not even Franco himself, could answer the question. As long, however, as the answer was in doubt, I could never relax my vigilance, or ignore any straw that seemed to show the direction of the wind.

The broad view that I then formed and that subsequent events did not modify, was that Franco definitely wished for an Axis victory, but not for an overwhelming victory. A peace of negotiation seemed likely to give him the chance of projecting himself into a European position of importance. The readiness with which he allowed Lequerica to act as the intermediary in the preliminaries for the French armistice was symptomatic of his wish to play a broker's part between the belligerents. In any case, he was bent upon getting what he could out of the general upheaval.

His difficulties were, however, twofold. In the first place Spain was in no position to fight. A million Spaniards had been killed during the Civil War. Much of the country was devastated, its agriculture and industry completely disorganised, and the people short of all the necessities of life. If, therefore, he was to enter the war, he must choose the moment more wisely than Mussolini and be quite sure that any serious fighting was over before Spain became a belligerent. It never occurred to him that the Germans might be defeated. The only question was when they would win, and what was the best moment for his joining them in their triumphal march. Mussolini's miscalculation was a warning against precipitancy. The better example to follow was that of a wiser Italian, Cavour, who had selected with unerring precision the right moment for Italy to join the Allies in the Crimean War. The trouble, however, with Franco was that he possessed none of Cavour's profound foresight and knowledge of European affairs.

Through the later months of 1940 I was convinced that this was Franco's state of mind. He did not want any war that meant heavy fighting. He did, however, want to gain certain trophies and advantages that could only be obtained from a German victory.

These prizes were Gibraltar and a predominant place for Spain in North-West Africa.

But here arose the second of his difficulties. Germany and Italy had precisely the same designs on these territories that controlled the Western Mediterranean. Neither was prepared to withdraw its claims, least of all for a country that was not ready to endure the heat and burden of the war. Each indeed was so jealous of the other that rather than abate their respective ambitions, they were prepared to lose repeated chances of doing irreparable damage to Allied interests.

These irreconcilable differences showed themselves very clearly in the autumn of 1940. To us they were invaluable. They meant the immunity of Gibraltar and North-West Africa from German attack at a time when we were in no position to resist it. The defences of Gibraltar were still in a very weak state. So weak indeed that the Governor, Sir Clive Liddell, insistently implored me to obtain him three months of peace for their improvement. Heavy guns from Germany were already installed in the Spanish hills that commanded the Straits. Tangier was in Spanish hands, and a large army in Spanish Morocco. With France out of the war, our own small army refitting and the United States still neutral, we could have done nothing in the autumn of 1940 to stop a German move through Spain to Africa.

Hitler had undoubtedly such a plan in mind. The splendid prize of African victory he was, however, determined to keep for himself. It was this determination that made him dissuade Mussolini from an invasion of Tunisia and French Morocco. It was for the same reason that he refused Franco's claim for African aggrandisement.

There was a further complication. By a strange freak of chance the French fleet that had created such grave anxieties for us, produced complications scarcely less troublesome for the three dictators.

Hitler realised that he must at almost any price gain control of it. Even after Oran, it was still a force that might well turn the scale in the Mediterranean. He saw also that for his world campaign he must have the French African bases. He was right.

Where, however, he made a mistake, was in believing that he could obtain both the fleet and the bases by negotiation with Vichy. Darlan, for all his hatred of Great Britain and his verbal promises to the Germans of collaboration, did not in the last resort intend to hand over the two chief potential instruments of his own power. As long, however, as Hitler believed that he could obtain his two objectives by negotiation, he hesitated to take any action that might force the Vichy Government into direct opposition. The invasion of Algeria and Morocco in the autumn of 1940 without French approval would have been an attack on the French Empire that even in the defeatist atmosphere of Vichy might well have meant a breach with Pétain and the serious embarrassment of Hitler's two chief aims.

Equally risky, apart from the objection of sharing German spoils with anyone else, would have been a partition of French North Africa between Germany, Italy and Spain. Each of them wanted everything. The very mention, therefore, of the disposal of African territory put Hitler on his guard.

It is this tortuous history of African intrigue that explains the failure of Hitler's interview with Franco on October 23rd at Hendaye on the Pyrenean frontier.

Hitler undoubtedly attached great importance to the meeting. All the evidence seemed to point to an easy Nazi success, and to Franco becoming the junior partner in a triumvirate of dictators. Franco's brother-in-law had recently been in Berlin, where he had given the impression that Spanish Falangistas and German Nazis were blood brothers united together by common policy and uniform organisation. Himmler had, in return, paid a state visit to Madrid where he had been fêted as if he were a sovereign prince. The Spanish press had been obediently carrying out its orders from the German Embassy. The Spanish army was convinced that, even if the war was not already over, the Allied defeat was only a matter of months. It was, therefore, well worth Hitler's while to journey to the Pyrenees and accord Franco the exceptional honour of a personal visit.

The proceedings at Hendaye were covered by the inevitable veil of official secrecy. Enough, however, emerged to show that the talks had not gone well. There had evidently been some cause of friction between the Führer and the Caudillo. The inquiries that I made in various directions resulted in a general consensus of opinion that the trouble had been over Spanish claims in Africa. Franco had demanded African territory as the price of

joining the Axis. The very demand that Hitler with his now aspirations and with his French policy of manœuvring the Vichy Government into his orbit neither would nor could satisfy. He seems, therefore, to have told Franco that he would not even discuss Spanish claims until Franco had actually fought for them. Franco, not wishing to fight, and never wishing to burn his boats, returned to Madrid without any African trophies, but also without any definite commitment to enter the war.

In the meanwhile, the Greek campaign had started well for us. It had diverted Hitler's interest from the western to the eastern Mediterranean. And more important than his interest, the guns that he needed for a march through Spain to Gibraltar had gone to help Mussolini in Greece.

The Italian defeats were in the meanwhile delighting the Spanish public, and Italian buildings in Madrid were being placarded with anti-Italian insults. "*Abajo los macarronistas*," "*Italiani, corraggio, fuggiamo*," were the kind of remarks that appeared on the walls, and a series of *chistes*¹ ridiculing Franco's former ally showed that Guadalajara was all that most Spaniards remembered of Italian help during the Civil War. Franco's cautious mind grasped the significance of these demonstrations. The Italian débâcle in Greece was a warning against any optimistic assumption that the war was over, whilst the reactions in Spain were unmistakable evidence of the unpopularity of one of the Axis partners.

The situation was in fact typical of several others that arose in the course of the war. With the warning of Mussolini before his eyes, Franco was always reluctant to act. Being incredibly complacent and believing himself infallible, he remained convinced that he could choose his own time for intervention. The doctrine of perfectionism lost him his chances. When Hitler wanted him in, he wished to be out, and when he was ready to move, Hitler's fortunes were so much in the ascendant that Spanish help became a matter of indifference to the Axis. This fugue with incidental variations was continuously played by the Führer and the Caudillo for the next three years. It suited us admirably. As long as the duet players remained at the piano, we were tolerably safe.

It was, however, a precarious situation. If we had stood

¹ A *chiste* is the equivalent of the French *bon mot*, but less intellectual and more brutal—what indeed Sancho Panza might have said, and not what the Duc de la Rochefoucauld might have written.

aside and left Franco and Hitler to their own devices, the two dictators might one day have reconciled their jealousies, and brought Spain into a military alliance. It was, therefore, urgently necessary to counter-balance their moves and counter-moves with a constructive programme that would create a solid body of Spanish goodwill for the Allied cause. This, as I have already explained, was the chief justification of our economic policy. All through the autumn of 1940 we pressed on with it and in spite of Serrano Suñer's opposition, we succeeded in making a series of satisfactory agreements.

Spain was in urgent need of a million tons of wheat to save the people from starvation. Her rubber, oil and cotton stocks were so low that without imports from the Anglo-Saxon area, the national life would have come to a standstill. These facts were obvious not only to the Spanish officials of the Ministries of Commerce and Foreign Affairs but to every Spaniard whose daily life was embarrassed and endangered by the shortages. Yet Franco refused to admit the fact of Spanish need, and Serrano Suñer did his utmost to obstruct any economic negotiations with Great Britain and the United States, that were likely to provide Spain with the bare necessities of existence.

It was indeed an incredible state of affairs. Spain vitally needing certain basic commodities, the Anglo-Saxon area alone able and willing to provide them. Yet the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs struggling to prevent any Spanish agreements with the only two countries that could satisfy Spanish needs. So bitterly was Serrano Suñer opposed to any *modus vivendi* with the democracies that at one of the most critical moments during the protracted discussions he lost his temper with the American Ambassador, and created a situation in which for weeks on end it was impossible for them to meet.

None the less, we, on our side, persisted with our considered policy of proving to the Spaniards that their real interest lay in the Anglo-Saxon orbit and not in the new order.

The Trade Agreement of April 1939, had pointed the way. If, however, full advantage was to be taken of its provisions, certain modifications and extensions were urgently required. For widening, therefore, the field of exchange, first Portugal on July 24th and subsequently Morocco on November 29th were brought into a triangular arrangement within the sterling area.

Experience, however, showed that this expansion was still insufficient. Oil was of all Spanish needs the most urgent. If

the economic life of Spain was to be closely associated with the Allies, it was essential that the chief producer of oil, the United States of America, should be an active partner in our Spanish programme. It was to urge the need of American co-operation that I visited Lisbon in November for talks with Lord Lothian.

Lord Lothian, one of my oldest friends, had just completed a visit to London and was returning to Lisbon. He and I had already been exchanging letters on the importance of Spain, and only a fortnight before I saw him, he had written to me as follows:

October 19th.

"I was sorry that my trip to Madrid fell through because no plane ran to-day, and I have to leave for London to-morrow. I wanted to have a talk with you about Spain and the U.S.A.

"There is no doubt that the interest of the U.S.A. and especially of Roosevelt in Spain, Gibraltar and West Africa is rapidly growing. They are beginning to realise that the control of the exit from the Mediterranean and of Dakar, Freetown, etc., is nearly as important to them—to hemispheric defence—as to us. The President was enthusiastic about the abortive de Gaulle expedition to Dakar, and the last thing he said to me was that he hoped that we could establish ourselves firmly in West Africa before it was too late. They realise too, or the more intelligent of them, that the ultimate purpose of the Axis-Japanese Pact is to confront U.S.A. with a simultaneous war in the Atlantic and the Pacific—a two-ocean war for which they have only a one-ocean navy—if they can weaken our hold on the Atlantic.

"The trouble of course is that U.S.A. is still officially neutral and will remain so until there is some overt act affecting their virtual national interests which will make possible that internal democratic unity without which a declaration of war is impossible and until their rearmament has progressed much further—and that will not be until 1942. They will not declare war until they have an effective weapon in their hands. Therefore, at present they have to rely upon us, while supplying us with munitions and money lavishly to do the work which they ought to do themselves.

"The President, with the consent of H.M.G., has arranged to send a Red Cross Food Ship to Spain, with food to be distributed by the American Red Cross, as the U.S. Minister in Madrid said that to-day was the psychological date to make

Spain realise that neutrality meant food and that war spelt starvation. This will probably be followed by others on the same terms.

"I am sure, therefore, that the main line to take with Spain and Portugal is to convince them that air and sea armaments and power will increasingly pass into the hands of the British Empire and the U.S.A., that our old control of the seas will be maintained as an Anglo-American sea and air control, that the great reserves of foodstuffs and raw materials as well as of manufacture will belong to us, and that they had better side with us as the ultimately winning side."

This letter was the basis of our subsequent talks in Lisbon. The more fully he and I discussed Spanish questions, the more firmly he grasped the strategic importance of the Peninsula. His last words to me were a promise to impress upon Roosevelt the great advantage of bringing Spain into the Atlantic orbit.

We never met again. For within a few weeks he was struck down on December 12th at the very peak of his career. A tragic loss for the British Commonwealth that could ill spare at this critical moment an Ambassador who combined so sympathetic a personality with so wide a vision and so fertile an imagination. He and I had been close friends since the day when as Philip Kerr, he had arrived at New College, Oxford, young and fair in appearance, *naïf*, friendly and forthcoming in manner, a promising athlete, and a historian who only needed the inspiration of Herbert Fisher to develop his latent talent as an original thinker. In after years we continued to find much in common between us. Particularly at the India Office, when I was Secretary of State, and he the Under-Secretary, our minds worked in complete harmony over the many controversial questions connected with Indian constitutional reform.

His death meant an especially heavy loss to me in December, 1940. He had just returned to Washington full of interest in the potentialities of the Spanish Peninsula, and I needed his help for my long-drawn battle with Serrano Suñer.

At the moment, however, that I received this blow I found some measure of compensation in an unexpected quarter. Dimitrio Carceller, the new Minister of Commerce and Industry, who had entered the Government in September as a Falangist partisan of Serrano Suñer, began to show remarkable independence

in his views about Anglo-Spanish trade. I had established direct contact with him as it was obviously a waste of time to continue discussions with Serrano Suñer, a Minister for Foreign Affairs who did not wish them to succeed. The contact soon developed into a close liaison between the Embassy and his department. Scarcely a day passed without visits to and from the Embassy and his Ministry, in many of which I myself took an active part.

Carceller was certainly the most picturesque, perhaps I should say picaresque of the Spanish Ministers whom I met. He had started life as a penniless boy in Catalonia. By force of character and boundless energy he had made himself a very competent engineer. Never failing to seize any chance of advancement that came his way, he had become a leading figure in the Falange, whilst in private life he had swiftly built up for himself an immense fortune. Having become one of the richest men in Spain—many Spaniards declared that he was as rich as his chief rival, Juan March—his opportunities for amassing greater wealth expanded with every day of his ministerial life. It would, however, be unjust to conclude that he was solely interested in feathering his own nest. In all the many negotiations that I had with him, he always drove a hard bargain in the interests of Spain. His methods were to say the least unconventional. He had no hesitation in criticising his ministerial colleagues and particularly Serrano Suñer when they crossed his path. He kept the Falange out of his negotiations. And very wisely he objected to putting anything on paper. He knew only too well that every written document in a Madrid Ministry was available to the Germans almost before the ink was dry.

It was with this man that my advisers and I were able to make many economic and financial agreements. In the autumn of 1940 we succeeded in convincing him of the economic strength of the British Empire and the value of sterling. The result was that although he had been appointed as an autarchist and Falangist totalitarian, he was by the end of the year formally asking for British credits.

I must not, however, anticipate the economic developments that followed the opening chapter of my dealings with this realist minister. They were to pass through various vicissitudes. Upon the whole, however, it may be said that he carried out his undertakings, and consistently supported a policy of good economic relations with Great Britain. Between us, indeed, we created an industrial and commercial goodwill in Spain that made it in-

creasingly difficult for Serrano Suñer to push the country into war.

This result, that first showed itself in the autumn of 1940, was particularly important at a time when our military and political stock was at a very low ebb.

It was the conviction that we had gained ground by exploiting the economic field that justified me, at the end of the year, in summing up the position to the Prime Minister in the following letter:

December 20th, 1940.

"I think here I can say that there has been a great change in these seven months. It started very slowly and uncertainly, but in the last few weeks, and indeed in the last few days, it has gathered volume at a great pace. Spaniards who never before came near us are beginning to make advances towards us. More still are talking of the possibility of Spanish resistance to a German invasion. Not a day passes without some sign that the British Embassy is becoming the focus of Spanish national feeling. You with your historical knowledge will be comparing the position to-day with the position in 1808. Even the meeting between Hitler and Molotov has its historical counterpart in the conference of Tilsit.

"I have been refreshing my memory of the War of Spanish Independence by reading a most remarkable book, *Napoleon et L'Espagne* by Grandmaison. Some of the chapters might have described my own experiences here; the camions coming across the frontier for food, the French, like the Germans of recent months, strutting about Spain as if they had bought the country, the corruption of Spanish officials, the carefully organised service of intelligence and sabotage. All these things have been happening here exactly as they happened on the eve of the Peninsular War. Will our story end as the story ended in 1815? All that I can say is that national feeling is steadily growing and Spanish xenophobia beginning to show itself. Only yesterday I heard of two cases of German officers killed by Spaniards in hotel brawls at San Sebastian. It is these signs of the times that have kept me here in face of endless irritations and provocations. It is also these signs of the times that should prevent us taking too tragically the terrible gaffes of an ignorant and disorganised government. Here again is a similarity between 1940 and 1808. In each case, there

was one of the most inefficient governments that anyone could conceive."

A week later I received the Prime Minister's answer:

"Thank you very much for your letter. I had myself noticed resemblance to Tilsit milestone. Am very glad you are making headway. Every day gained is of value. All good wishes to you both."

How encouraging I found these personal messages! They showed the Prime Minister's keen interest in every phase of the war. But what was scarcely less important, they showed his knowledge of two of the vital factors of victory, history and human nature.

Part II

1941-42. FRANCO'S HESITATIONS

"There is no country in Europe in the affairs of which foreigners can interfere with so little advantage as Spain. There is no country in which foreigners are so much disliked, and even despised, and whose manners and habits are so little congenial with those of other nations in Europe."

(The Duke of Wellington's memorandum to Viscount Castlereagh, April 16, 1820.)

CHAPTER NINE

WHILST the New Year might well have opened in worse conditions, I found myself very far removed from smooth waters. Franco was clearly playing a double game that might at any time turn against us, while Serrano Suñer was making no secret of his sure *and triumphant belief in an Axis victory*. The press and the police were completely in the hands of the Falange. With at least 200,000 political prisoners and a ruthless system of espionage and repression, any organised opposition to the régime was almost impossible. The great majority of Spaniards, exhausted and starving, took a German victory for granted and resented the continuance of a war that they believed to be already lost by the Allies.

It was upon this atmosphere of fear and fatalism that the Nazi machine operated with ceaseless intensity. Spain, being isolated from the outer world, was particularly susceptible to unscrupulous propaganda. The Civil War had made havoc of Spanish nerves. No counteracting force of public opinion could exist in a country where even private criticism was a criminal offence. The result was a continuous series of easy victories in the German war of nerves. A mysterious panic would start, the bourse would collapse, most of the Allied diplomats in Madrid would pack their bags and the world at large would soon accept as gospel truth the sensational lies disseminated by Lazar from the German Embassy. In ordinary circumstances these waves of

credulity would have been of little account. They were, however, very dangerous in the explosive atmosphere of 1941. Fear upsets a people's balance. It often makes men act wickedly. It almost always also makes them act foolishly. Lazar, no doubt, felt that if he could maintain a state of panic, he was more likely to make the Spanish Government do what he wanted, and less likely to find any serious opposition in the Spanish people.

The fact that the Nazi technique was always the same made very little impression upon Spaniards whose abnormal condition predisposed them to believe anything that was said with sufficient force and reiteration. The campaign, carefully planned in the German Embassy, would first show itself in ordinary conversation. The talk of Madrid and the other principal cities would suddenly be concentrated on some impending German move, for example, a decisive victory in the immediate future, a new weapon, the immediate invasion of the Spanish Peninsula, or the imminence of peace negotiations. In a day or two every newspaper in Spain would re-echo their master's voice with added detail and all the accessories of established facts. By this time, Lisbon and Gibraltar, two hot-beds of rumour, would take up the tale, and the press agencies of Great Britain and the United States, obtaining the news from so many apparently different sources, would send it *humming round the world*. When I saw the success of Lazar's activities upon Spanish nerves, I could not help remembering the inimitable description of the way a lie spreads in Don Basilio's bass solo in Rossini's "Barbiere di Siviglia." A stray word or two at first, then a well-authenticated story, finally, a detailed history, accepted and repeated by everyone, and the calumny or lie becomes an axiom.

The first six months of 1941 gave me ample opportunity for studying this typically Nazi technique.

At first, there was somewhat of a lull in the campaign. Hitler was preparing his next coup. Whilst the Italians were suffering continuous defeats on land, sea, and in the air, aggressive propaganda would have been mistimed. Serrano Suñer could safely be left to carry on the good work in his own way. He certainly started the year well by giving an interview on January 2nd to the Falangist paper *Haz* in which he spoke of "the international rapacity and absurdity of the artificial internationalisation of Tangier." A few weeks later in opening a German press exhibition in Madrid he adopted an even more provocative attitude towards the Allies by openly boasting that during his

three years' period of control, he had kept the Spanish press continuously subservient to German interests. Hitler and Himmler could feel satisfied that as their work was being done for them in Spain, they could devote their undivided energies to their more immediate plans elsewhere.

The waiting period continued for some weeks. The Führer, in response to the Duce's urgent appeal, was sending German reinforcements to Greece, Yugo-Slavia and Italy, and Franco was congratulating himself that the war had gone to the eastern and central Mediterranean rather than the western.

Excitement, however, flared up when Franco and Serrano Suñer motored off to meet Mussolini at Bordighera on February 12th, and stopped on the way back for a discussion with Pétain at Montpellier. Gossip in Madrid, no doubt stoked up by the indefatigable Lazar, had it that the Duce and the Caudillo had agreed upon closing both ends of the Mediterranean. My information, so far from supporting this rumour, went to show that Franco, seeing that things were going badly for Italy in Greece, and realising that the Germans would as a result be fully occupied in the Balkans, once again avoided any immediate commitment to enter the war. It seemed certain, however—and subsequent developments proved the surmise to be true—that he had promised Hitler every help short of actually fighting. Rumour at the time had it that Mussolini was not averse to Spanish non-belligerency. A belligerent Spain meant rival claims for African territory that he had marked out for himself. It was also suggested that it might be advantageous to Italy to keep Franco out of the war until the very eve of victory when his entry would act as a make-weight against complete German domination. From the Pétain interview nothing was expected, and according to my reports, nothing resulted.

By the end of February, the lines of the spring campaign were beginning to appear. An intensification of war in the Balkans and eastern Mediterranean, and a full-scale peace offensive in the West based on the claim that the war was over and that Great Britain by wishing to continue it was destroying European civilisation, were evidently to be the two lines of attack.

The arrival of German air squadrons in Italy on January 3rd was significant of what was to follow. Rommel was soon to be in command in Africa and Rundstedt in Eastern Europe, and their combined offensives were clearly intended to overrun the Balkans, take Suez and close the eastern Mediterranean. For the first half

of the year the plan worked with clock-like precision. First, Yugo-Slavia, then Greece was overwhelmed, next, the neutrals with one accord began to make terms with the Axis. In Iraq and Iran German influence seemed to have become predominant, Turkey accepted a German treaty of non-aggression, Sweden allowed transit to a German division, and Portugal, later in the year, landing facilities to the Japanese in Timor. Vichy, as was to be expected, was in the first line of the defeatists. Pétain, in spite of his former protestations about the integrity of the French Empire, unreservedly declared in a radio broadcast of May 14th for full collaboration with the Germans.

When, therefore, Hitler announced on May 14th that the war would be ended in 1941 with a complete German victory, his prophecy seemed for once to be based on a substantial foundation of fact.

It will be seen from these events that the stage was well set for the peace offensive in Spain. For the first half of the year, therefore, the Spaniards were subjected to a mixed campaign of persuasion and terror. Would they not be wise to bow gracefully to the inevitable, and obtain the great advantages of the Tripartite pact? Had they not also observed the terrible fate of the foolish Greeks and Yugo-Slavs who had attempted to resist the German might? This was the double-barrelled question ruthlessly pointed at people whose nerves were already awry.

Simultaneously with this pressure upon Spain, the Germans attempted direct approaches to me. One of Ribbentrop's staff in the German Embassy made repeated efforts to make contact with me. Spanish intermediaries pressed his memoranda on me. Prince Max Hohenlohe, a social favourite in most of the capitals of Europe, married to a Spanish wife and now a citizen of Lichtenstein, joined in the game. All in vain. My staff and I made it clear beyond a doubt that the British Government would have nothing to do with any peace negotiations and that sooner or later the British people would undoubtedly win the war.

In the meanwhile I continued to harp on the theme that had run through all my discussions with Lord Lothian—the immediate need of American help in Spain. Outward and visible evidence of American co-operation was not only invaluable for convincing the Spaniards that the sterling-dollar area was more useful to them than the new order, but was essentially necessary during the peace offensive as incontrovertible proof that the

United States with their immense resources were behind us, that the war was not going to end in 1941 and that a German victory was beyond the bounds of possibility.

My letters and despatches during these weeks insist again and again on this theme. Not indeed because the authorities in London disagreed with it—they fully accepted it, but because the peculiar conditions in Spain made it very difficult to make any Spanish-American agreement. Serrano Suñer, who made no secret of his detestation of the United States in general, and of Mr. Weddell, the American Ambassador in particular, was doing his best to prevent any American co-operation in the Iberian Peninsula. Whilst he had reluctantly been forced to accept a shipload of wheat from the American Red Cross, he had done his best to stop any reference to the gift in the press and to exploit the distribution for the benefit of the Falange. He had gone further. He had obstructed and delayed an important interview with Franco for which Mr. Weddell had urgently applied. Its object was to transmit a friendly message from President Roosevelt to the chief of the Spanish state, and to foreshadow a programme of American supplies for Spain. Serrano Suñer's excuse was that he had been insulted by the American Ambassador. In point of fact, Mr. Weddell had put on his table a letter that although posted and received in Spain, bore the mark of the German censor, and had added the not irrelevant remark that the existence of a foreign censorship within the country was a strange commentary on Spanish independence. The interview ended in an explosion, the reverberations of which made a breach of several weeks' duration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the American Embassy.

This was not an encouraging beginning for a policy of Anglo-American influence in Spain. President Roosevelt's initiative, taken after discussion with us, had been rudely rebuffed. It was not surprising that the first reaction, both in Washington and London, was in favour of abandoning our plans, and leaving Spain to commit suicide.

Upon further consideration, however, the basic facts of the situation once again forced themselves to the front. Our war effort needed a non-belligerent and a quiet Spain. In 1941 Spanish belligerency would have meant a military alliance with the Axis, whilst any disturbance in the country would have given Hitler his opportunity for directly intervening in Spanish affairs. In either case, the Atlantic seaboard of the Peninsula, the western

entrance to the Mediterranean and the North African bases would have been threatened with German occupation. In these circumstances the only wise test to be applied to any course of action was whether or not it would help or hinder our military operations. It seemed clear in this case that a policy of boycotting Spain, although thoroughly justified by the behaviour of the Spanish Government, would definitely play into Hitler's hands.

Both Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt were quick to grasp this essential fact. Mr. Churchill, who, during Mr. Eden's absence in the Middle East was administering the Foreign Office, constantly sent me messages that showed his unshaken belief in an active policy of Anglo-American co-operation in Spain, whilst President Roosevelt chose this critical moment for sending his confidant, Colonel Bill Donovan, on a mission of inquiry into the affairs of the eastern and western Mediterranean. Colonel Donovan who had commanded the old 69th Regiment in the war of 1914 combined a wide knowledge of tactics and strategy with the keen mind of a successful lawyer. His visit to Madrid was most timely. I do not know which of his qualifications most strongly impressed me, his mental alertness or his physical energy. On one and the same day he had important discussions with Dr. Salazar in Lisbon and the military authorities in Gibraltar, and at the end of it, apparently untired, started his return flight to the States via London. Knowing that he had the ear of the President and was sure to have important interviews with Franco and Serrano Suñer, and knowing also that his stay in Madrid would be short, I was prepared with my detailed comments on the main points at issue as soon as I saw him. I cannot do better than quote my notes and the covering letter with which I sent them to Mr. Churchill:

26th February, 1941.

"I write this line to say that I have had a most interesting morning's conversation with Colonel Donovan. He struck me as first class in every way, mentally, morally and physically. As he hopes to be in England in a few days' time and you will no doubt see him at once, I will not worry you with the details of the talk. I will only say that he accepted to the full my presentation of the Iberian case. As to how I put it, I perhaps cannot do better than enclose a copy of the notes that I used with him."

The Ambassador's notes for discussion with Colonel Donovan.

"Colonel Donovan has realised the importance of the Eastern Mediterranean.

"I am delighted that he is here to study the Western. From the point of view of the United States and the United Kingdom this may be even more important than the Eastern.

"From the point of view of the United States, should it not be a part of the Munroe doctrine for American defence?

"From the point of view of the United Kingdom the Spanish Peninsula is practically our only gate left in Europe and the closing of the Straits of Gibraltar would greatly lengthen the war and add to our problems. If we could have a friendly Spain, it would give us the chance of a future offensive.

"The first point that I make to Colonel Donovan is that President Roosevelt should take the Spanish Peninsula and the coast of North-West Africa under his special protection. I will describe how later.

"The second question is: What chance is there of such a policy succeeding?

"Is Spain so near to the Axis that it is bound to be caught up into the wheel?

"Some would say that the position is hopeless.

"If things go badly for us in Greece, there will be many people here who will resign themselves to German domination.

"At the same time these facts should be remembered:

"I came here at the beginning of June, i.e., at the time of the French collapse and the Italian entry into the war. Halifax and I thought I should be here a fortnight. I kept, therefore, my aeroplane to fly back. I have been here nine months. At the lowest depth of our fortunes Franco did not enter the war.

"So far, so good. It shows there is a hope of keeping Spain out of the war. This hope is strengthened by the growing xenophobia in the country and the army's hostility to the Falange, the chief centre of German activities.

"At the same time we must take account of a very formidable fact, the conviction of Franco and Serrano Suñer shared by Vigon and several of the generals that Germany must win. They have all been mesmerised by the size of the German military machine. Franco and Serrano Suñer also believe that

a British victory would mean the end of all dictatorships in Europe, their own included.

"The second point that I want to make to Colonel Donovan is that it is essential that the President, Colonel Donovan, the Ambassador here and the South American governments should din into Franco's head that sooner or later we are bound to win and that so far as the Spanish Government is concerned, the sooner the better, for the longer the war goes on, the greater the strain on the present régime.

"It is most important to apply to Franco all the pressure possible from the two Americas.

"Would the President encourage pressure from Latin America?

"My third point is that unlike last June there is now a will to resist in Spain. With time and with careful fostering this will should become formidable. At present it is hesitating and disjointed. It was hesitating and disjointed in 1808. But in 1814 with British help it destroyed Napoleon.

"How can we strengthen this will to resist?

"(1) *Military help.*

For this we must have United States help with munitions and shipping.

"(2) *Economic help.*

We must be able to prove that Spain can maintain her existence and her economic independence outside Dr. Funk's continental bloc.

"Our approach to Spain should offer regulated help on a generous scale, regulated because we must not allow the accumulation of stocks.

"The help should consist of:

(1) *Necessities.* (2) *Shipping.* (3) *Credits.*

"Our sanction is the power to stop it any moment. The help should be offered at once. There should not be an hour's delay.

"An essential part of it must be an avoidance of all possible causes of friction, e.g.:

"French and Spanish disputes in Morocco are dangerous. We must keep North Africa quiet. Any commotion will bring the Germans in.

"We must be prepared for many provocations. The Germans are determined to frustrate any attempt at better relations between us, for example in the economic field.

"Serrano Suñer will play in with them.

"We must therefore have the patience of Jobs.

"It is worth it. If we can keep the Peninsula out of the Axis, we frustrate Hitler's effort to conquer all Europe and we keep Spain and Portugal in the orbit of the oceanic powers, the United States and the British Empire, and prevent them being absorbed into Hitler's bloc."

I have purposely quoted my notes at length as they seem to me to summarise the case for the Spanish policy that under the instructions of London I was attempting in the early months of 1941 to carry into effect.

Colonel Donovan who appeared impressed by my argument, had long interviews with both Franco and Serrano Suñer. To both he spoke with almost brutal frankness. Serrano Suñer in particular he treated as if he were a prisoner in the dock. Using all his forensic ability he went through a long indictment that omitted nothing in the charge sheet, and left the Minister almost speechless with fury. The Minister's reactions were what might have been expected. His resentment against the United States became even more bitter than before. For myself the talk was a tonic, as it showed President Roosevelt's keen interest in the affairs of Spain.

Most important of all, the world of Madrid soon heard of the strong line that Colonel Donovan had taken and concluded from it that, so far from the war being ended, a new chapter was soon to begin with the formidable participation of the United States. An antidote had, in fact, been found for Lazar's peace poison, that, though it did not dispel the nervous symptoms at least prevented a dangerous crisis.

A widespread nervousness, however, continued to prevail throughout the first half of the year. In the meanwhile, the Germans, true to type, gave another example of their love of pedantic precision by naming a date for the end of the campaign. Just as they had declared September 15th, 1940, to be the day for Hitler's cocktail party in London, so now they spread the news through Spain that May 1st, 1941, had been fixed for the fall of Suez. It might have been thought that after the failure of the first date, no one would believe in the second. To draw any such conclusion would be to misjudge both the Spanish atmosphere and the Spanish temperament. "My friends in England," to quote the words of a letter that I wrote on May 1st, the actual day arranged for the fall of Suez, "may smile at the arrogance of these pro-

phedies. Let them not, however, underrate the effect that a doctrine of inevitability, spread by every expert device of publicity and propaganda, has upon a war-weary and starving population. Day by day this flood of propaganda has continued and day by day the Spaniards have become more and more nervous of finding themselves on the losing side. Here again, let us not forget what it means to be on the losing side to-day in Europe. It is not a matter of error of judgment or of a political defeat. It is, in the eyes of many, a personal question of life and death. There are many of our friends in Spain who believe, as I think with reason, that if the Germans entered Spain and they were found to be opposing them, their lives would actually be in danger. This dominating sentiment of personal fear must be constantly taken into account when we condemn Spanish officials for their procrastination and evasion in carrying out agreements that they make with us. Physical fear is, as I have often said, the dominating element on the continent, and it is the physical fear, not only for the occupation of a country's territory, but for the individual lives of public and private men who are prepared to work with us.

"It will be seen from what I have said that the picture has been very black during the last three weeks. Depressing, however, as it has been, particularly in view of the hopes that had been excited by our African victories and the initial stand of Yugo-Slavia, I am, on the whole, surprised that it has not been worse. Many would have said that the Spanish Government would already have been swept off its feet and would, in accordance with a veritable cloud of rumours, have joined the Axis. Yet on May 1st, the date on which Suez was to have been taken, General Franco seems still to be holding his position of non-belligerency in an atmosphere of nebulous inaction. So many and various stories have come to me of the signature of the Tripartite Pact, of secret agreements between Serrano Suñer and the Germans, of the actual entry of German troops into Spain, of the division of Spain into two zones, occupied and non-occupied, with Barcelona as the capital of the non-occupied zone, that I have spared no pains to check the view that the Generalissimo has not changed the main lines of his policy. The result of my inquiries goes to show that all my best sources of information unite in supporting the view that there has been no change, that General Franco does not want the Germans in Spain and that he is still trying to keep them out. As to Serrano Suñer, my own view is that he wishes to push

Spain into the Axis. I should, however, in fairness say that in circles near him, it is being said by his friends that he also wishes to maintain non-belligerency. In any case he would probably hesitate to encourage a German entry unless he were sure that all the conditions were favourable."

The immediate course of events seemed to confirm this appreciation. A week later, the Caudillo made a significant appointment to the Ministry of Gobernacion. Serrano Suñer, it will be remembered, had continued to administer the department although he had officially left it on becoming Minister for Foreign Affairs. For Franco to make an appointment at all was therefore to diminish his brother-in-law's power. To appoint Colonel Galarza, a faithful military supporter and not a party man might well be regarded as a move away from the Falange. With the Germans fully occupied in the Balkans Franco seemed to be edging from the party to the army side.

This apparent back-sliding roused the anger of the German Embassy. Von Stohrer made it clear that any change of policy would have serious consequences. The result was a quick withdrawal on Franco's part. The control of the press, one of the two main sources of power in the Ministry of Gobernacion, was put back into Serrano Suñer's hands, whilst a batch of new official appointments proved that the Falange still dominated the civil administration of the country.

Into this confused atmosphere burst on June 22nd the bomb-shell of Hitler's invasion of Russia. The explosion reverberated from one end of Spain to the other. To Franco it must have appeared as a providential diversion of the German armies from the west to the east. To Serrano Suñer it offered a golden opportunity for aligning Spain in an anti-communist crusade. To the world at large it confirmed the belief that Hitler would soon finish with the east, and be in a position to impose a peace on the west. Each of these trends of thought increased the difficulty of our position. We had suddenly become the allies of the government that to almost every Spaniard who was not in prison or exile appeared as antichrist. We were standing in the way of a peace that now seemed more than ever inevitable. Our folly in continuing the war was worse than a crime, for we were already hopelessly defeated. So ran the current of thought throughout Spain.

It was not surprising that in these circumstances Franco took a definite turn in the Axis direction. His annual speech on July

17th provided him with a platform. In a series of jumps off its deepest end he glorified the "German arms that were leading the battle for which Europe and Christianity had so long waited," attacked our "inhuman blockade of the continent," declared that, "the freedom of the seas was a grandiose farce," warned the United States off Europe, repudiated Anglo-American economic aid and pontifically stated that the Allies had completely and finally lost the war.

It would be hard to imagine a more provocative speech. So provocative indeed that I wondered how this cautious Gallego could have made it. Did he understand what he was saying? I sometimes doubted. His manner did not suggest any strong feeling. Quite the contrary. He would read his annual oration in a low, monotonous voice with no sign of emotion and with little physical movement except for an occasional raising of the arm. It was the technique of a man who had been given a long dissertation to read for the first time. His audience on the other hand seemed to have seen the draft in advance, for at regular intervals and at certain passages they would by way of encouragement shout, "Franco, Franco, Franco." There would reign between these interjections the sleepy atmosphere of a summer afternoon.

Such was the curious setting for his five annual philippics against the Allies, of which the speech of 1941 was one of the worst.

The reaction of the British Government was immediate. The Foreign Secretary in an answer to a Parliamentary question on July 24th explained the true basis of our Spanish policy and ended with these words of warning:

"His Majesty's Government have now noted that General Franco, in his speech to the Falange National Council on July 17th, displayed complete misunderstanding not only of the general war condition, but also of British economic policy towards Spain. If economic arrangements are to succeed, there must be goodwill on both sides, and General Franco's speech shows little evidence of such goodwill. His statement makes it appear that he does not require further economic assistance from this country. If that is so, His Majesty's Government will be unable to proceed with their plans, and their future policy will depend on the actions and attitude of the Spanish Government."

Had Franco expected this inevitable rejoinder when he made his speech? Had he failed to understand the words that had been put into his mouth? Or could he have spoken with the definite intention of flouting Great Britain and the United States?

In spite of appearances I came to the conclusion after listening to several of these orations that he not only understood what he was saying, but was speaking with the set purpose of ingratiating himself with Hitler. He may have wished to smooth the path that led to the Axis. Or he may have thought that by throwing verbal loaves to the wolves he could avoid their teeth without joining the pack. Or again he may have spoken strong words to show the Spanish public that he was no *roi faineant*, but a real dictator in the true style of Hitler and Mussolini who could say what he liked and damn the consequences.

Perhaps the most probable explanation in view of his tortuous Gallego mind is that his motives were a mixture of all three alternatives. In any case, he prohibited any public reference to Mr. Eden's reply and, having once made the speech, devoted the following days to explaining it away.

The speech, however, was clear evidence of a government swing to the German side.

Serrano Suñer evidently wished to push the situation to a crisis. Indeed, he had already outbid his brother-in-law by his own action. On the morning of June 24th he went to the Falange headquarters in the Calle de Alcalá and made a fiery harangue to an excited crowd in the street. As soon as he had finished, the mob moved off, apparently under orders, and in different directions to the two entries of Fernando El Santo, the street in which the British Embassy is situated. There then followed a carefully organised riot. A wagon arrived with a load of stones as munitions. That the needs of publicity had not been forgotten, was shown by the appearance of German cars equipped with cinema cameras. The police guard although they had been warned of the likelihood of trouble, had been withdrawn on the pretext that the demonstration had been cancelled by the Falange that morning.

The attack had in all respects been methodically planned in the true German manner. It was to begin with the burning of the British staff cars standing outside the Embassy. It was at this point that Spanish forgetfulness frustrated German efficiency. Matches were then very scarce in Madrid, and either no one had a match or no one wished to sacrifice one in a street battle. The

cars, therefore, escaped burning though several were seriously damaged by stones.

The next move was an attempt to break into the Embassy. At this point we were in a strong position. For not only were we protected by our regular force of British guards, but we had within the precincts sixteen of our escaped prisoners of war who were burning for the chance of a battle with the enemy. This part of the engagement, therefore, went well for us. The enemy fell back after breaking the windows and pulling down the flag. In the meanwhile, the more cautious members of the mob paraded the street, shouting in well-trained unison: "Gibraltar for Spain. British assassins," and strangely enough omitting any reference to Russia, the alleged pretext of the demonstration.

Although there were police stations on all sides, it took more than half an hour to induce the authorities to take any interest in what was happening. Eventually an order was given to clear the street, and the mob, faced at last by a detachment of resolute police, immediately dispersed without either resistance or arrests.

An hour or so later Serrano Suñer's private secretary, a sinister young Falangist, appeared, not indeed to make any apology but only to inspect the damage. Soon afterwards arrived Baron de Las Torres, the chief of the Protocol, an official of the old school who was genuinely horrified at this attack on a friendly mission.

In the meanwhile my staff and I held a council of war. The outrage attack that had been committed demanded an instant and exceptional counter-attack. We therefore decided to go in a body to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to demand an official apology for what had happened. This demand I put to the Chief of the Protocol and asked him to arrange for an immediate interview with the Minister. "He is not available as he is not in Madrid. He is at the Pardo at a Council of Ministers," was Baron Las Torres' reply. "Please, then," I said, "go at once to the Pardo and send a message into the Council of Ministers that my staff and I are waiting to see him."

Baron Las Torres went off, and shortly afterwards I heard that the Minister was prepared to receive us in his private flat. Our company consisted of the diplomatic staff and the service attachés, the last three in uniform. When we arrived, the private secretary who received us proposed that I should see the Minister alone, and that my staff should wait outside. I replied that we had come as a body to mark the gravity of the occasion and that

as a body we must see the Minister. Having gained my point, we filed into the Minister's room. In spite of his offer of chairs, we remained standing, whilst I first read and then handed him a strongly worded protest. When I had finished, the Minister attempted to make some kind of explanation. I interrupted him, saying dryly that we had not come to argue. We then bowed and walked out.

I subsequently learnt that Serrano Suñer's staff expected us to make a physical attack on him. His secretaries who were fully armed were watching us through the door and from behind the screens. As one at least of his entourage was a dangerous gunman, it was perhaps well that the interview did not pass from words to shots.

A few days afterwards I had an interview with Franco in which I repeated the protest. The Caudillo, who was evidently anxious to smooth over the incident, suggested that I had turned the irresponsible action of some young hotheads into a serious affair of high politics. I answered that the chain of events from the Minister's speech in the Calle de Alcalá to the German cars in the street provided unanswerable proof of official complicity. Whilst he refused to accept this charge, he promised to arrest the ringleaders.

I could do no more, though I knew that the promise was worthless. Two or three arrests were in fact made. The police in accordance with their regular practice selected a few harmless individuals who were supposed to have leftist opinions, and subsequently reported that the demonstration had been inspired by the Reds. The chief of police was at that time a notorious Falangist who had been found guilty of killing a monarchist more than seventy years old with castor oil, and could be relied on to make appropriate arrests.

The Nazis appeared to be delighted with the incident. The German cinemas showed detailed films of the attack and left no doubt of the staff work behind it. The rumour-spread in Madrid, no doubt by German agents, was that the operation against the British Embassy had been so successful that it would shortly be repeated against the American.

I formed a very different opinion of the result. This is how I expressed it on July 2nd to Mr. Eden:

"The Embassy riot, although it made things very uncomfortable and perhaps dangerous for us, may prove to be

a blessing in disguise. For at a moment when Spanish sympathy was drifting dangerously away from us, it created a good deal of personal sympathy for us amongst self-respecting Spaniards."

An attack on a foreign mission in Madrid brought out the inherited instincts of the Spanish *caballero*. Civil wars and bad governments had buried them below the surface. But they were still there to rise from time to time in protest against some particularly flagrant outrage against good behaviour.

CHAPTER TEN

THE CRITICAL SUMMER was now passing, and the time was overdue for my first visit to London. My wife and I had stayed almost continuously in Madrid since our arrival, and we both needed a change of air after the political and physical heat of the Spanish capital.

There was a further overriding reason for our visit. Long absence abroad is apt to denationalise an ambassador. If he is not to become more cosmopolitan than British and if in particular he is to avoid developing into a partisan of the country to which he is accredited, he must make frequent visits to England and like Antæus renew his strength from contact with his native soil. In wartime, when personnel and policy are constantly changing, it is more than ever necessary that he should periodically uproot himself from his post and see his friends and colleagues in London.

Keenly as I looked forward to the visit, I could not help feeling some trepidation. I imagine that a released prisoner returning to the world, or a recluse leaving his cell after many months of isolation experiences the same kind of sensation that I felt on the eve of my journey. How should I be received in Whitehall, Westminster and Chelsea, the three centres of forty years of my public life? Would our friends, obsessed by the dangers, anxieties and occupations of the war, have the time or desire to welcome us? We had both been so remote from the war world of England. Our life had been so different from the methodical routine of the men and women who had faced unflinchingly the air raids and steadfastly continued their war work. It may be that my feeling was morbid. If so, it must be excused by the strain on my nerves of sixteen months in Madrid.

In any case, it was dissipated by the first breath of English air. Our old contacts and friendships were waiting ready to be renewed. Everyone whom we met was interested in my mission, and many appreciative of what had been achieved.

Better even than these personal pleasures was the chance that I was now given of discussing at the centre the strategic position of the Spanish Peninsula and North Africa.

The official world was at that time undecided as to the next move. Should we concentrate the weight of our effort on the

Channel ports? Should we turn the limited operations in Africa into our principal campaign? Should we, if a move through France were proved to be too costly, attempt a re-entry into Europe by the Balkans or Italy or the Spanish Peninsula? I was neither a westerner nor an easterner. I was a southerner. I was convinced that what the Prime Minister characteristically described as the underbelly of the Nazi monster was turned south. I did not go so far as to select Italy as its softest part. It was sufficient for me that if we could once establish ourselves in Africa, we could choose the objective for our next blow. It might even be that by that time the Spanish xenophobia that was increasingly turning against the Germans, might create the conditions for another peninsular expedition through Spain. This was a possibility not to be ignored, provided that it was understood that it could only be with the approval of the Spanish people that the Allies could safely enter Spain.

I therefore confined myself to a single objective. Whether at the Defence Committee of the War Cabinet, or in the committee rooms of the House of Commons or in the many talks that I had with responsible ministers and officials I insisted on the advantages of an African campaign. From the narrow angle of Spain, an Allied occupation of North Africa would strengthen the Spanish will to resist a German invasion, and neutralise a German occupation of the Peninsula if it were attempted. It might equally provide a jumping-off ground for an expeditionary force in Spain if the Spaniards gave us the right of passage or actually became our allies.

From the broader view of world strategy, an African expedition would offer the Americans the nearest and easiest way for entering the battle zone.

I supported these arguments with many details of the Spanish position and always concluded them by laying the utmost stress upon the need of avoiding a hostile Spain.

These discussions brought me once again into contact with my former service friends in Whitehall. The three chiefs of staff were typical of their respective services. Admiral Pound, a sailor of the Collingwood school, physically as hard as nails. After a late night's discussion with the Prime Minister he would start his work early the next morning without a sign of weariness. He could still stand a long day's shooting on the rare occasions when he had a few hours' leave. He could still also play a good game of tennis in spite of a game leg, as I well knew after many

sets with him under a tropical sun and on a cement court in Malta in the days when I was First Lord. His indeed was a body as well as a heart of oak.

General Dill was new to me as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, though I had known him for years in other posts. Here again was a leader who well embodied the traditions of the army. It almost goes without saying that he was an Irishman. The British Army has been constantly led by Irishmen, and in later years by Irishmen from Ulster. Is this a disparagement of English leadership? I do not think so. Our excellent characteristics need a stimulant, and from Ulster often comes the tonic that restores our health.

Lastly, Air Marshal Portal, not only fulfilling with knowledge and vision the vital post of Chief of the Air Staff, but looking the part to perfection. The slight figure, the look in his eyes, the sensitive manner, gave the impression of a dreamer as well as a doer. You can see this Ariel type in every squadron of the Royal Air Force. One of Air Marshal Trenchard's young men, he was building well on the foundations that had been so surely laid.

These three men, each so different from the other, seemed to me to be working as a band of brothers. How different from the inter-service battles that exhausted energy and embittered Whitehall throughout the first world war!

My most important talks were naturally with the Prime Minister. I had not seen him since I had parted with him on my departure for Spain. Since then, a notable change seemed to have come over him. He was less combative and explosive. Not that he had not been a good colleague before he became Prime Minister, or that he had not worked on excellent terms with Neville Chamberlain. Men, however, of his calibre are meant to lead and not to follow, and until they lead, are apt to show the inevitable symptoms of frustrated purpose. Was there ever in wartime a British Prime Minister like him? With him, there was none of the mysterious remoteness of Chatham, nor of the frigid loneliness of Pitt, nor of the almost feminine sensibility of Lloyd George. There he sat in the Cabinet-room or in the little dining-room in the basement, dressed in his blue, zipped overalls, smoking his big cigar, mentally more active than I had ever known him, physically and morally invulnerable, so it seemed, to every sling and arrow of good or bad fortune.

The overwhelming magnitude of his task had made him a better listener. Great men are often prone to declaim and re-

luctant to listen. It was one of the secrets of Lloyd George's success that he listened so well. When you talked with him he seemed to be absorbing not only your words but your actual personality behind them. Mr. Churchill was so completely enthralled in every phase of the war that he obviously welcomed the chance of hearing any details that might bear on the military operations. The affairs of the Spanish Peninsula especially interested him.

He was at this moment weighing in his mind a number of different plans, and was not yet in a position finally to commit himself. When I said good-bye to him one Monday morning after a week-end at Ditchley, he seemed to be moving towards an African campaign. He was in bed after a late night's work, surrounded by a breakfast tray, piles of papers and telephone receivers. "Go back to Spain," were his parting words. "The Peninsula is of great strategic importance. The war may sweep over North Africa, and one of these days you may have to go down to Africa from Madrid."

My visit to London was not only useful, in revealing to me some of the *arcana imperii*. It also provided me with the chance of removing some of the prejudices and misunderstandings that surrounded my Spanish mission.

For more than five years Spain had been the centre of an ideological battle that had stirred the most bitter controversy in almost every country of the world. The left regarded the Spanish republic as a bulwark of democracy; the right, equally misinformed, saw in Franco the champion of Christian civilisation against Asiatic tyranny.

It was clear from the columns of the press and question time in the House of Commons that many people thought that I had gone to Spain to appease Franco and to support his régime. Nothing was further from my intention. What was more important, nothing was further from Government policy. Throughout my mission there was no divergence of view between the Government and myself. The policy that I carried out was the policy of the whole Government and no personal idiosyncrasy of the British Ambassador. I had gone to Spain for one purpose and one purpose only, to do what I could, to keep Spain out of the German camp. As to supporting the Franco régime, if I had ever had any temptation to look kindly upon Falangism—and in point of fact I had never concealed my detestation of it—sixteen months in Spain would have completely

cured me of it. No one would have been better pleased than myself to see the end of its tyranny and injustice. It would, however, have been neither wise nor possible for us to try to overthrow it by direct action, particularly at a moment when our war effort demanded a quiet Peninsula. Any attempt at intervention would have brought the German army from the frontier to Madrid, Vigo and Gibraltar in the space of days or hours, and if it were made against Spanish wishes, would have turned Spain against us and immeasurably strengthened Franco and his régime. To have stirred up internal disorder would have had the same result. The Germans were waiting eagerly for an invitation to enter Spain. An internal rising would undoubtedly have made the forces of the right and the centre, that is to say, the only two effective forces that were free to act, welcome the Germans as the defenders of law and order. In these conditions, the remnant of the left would inevitably have been destroyed. Its leaders and most of its active rank and file were in prison, whilst the émigré refugees had lost much of their influence with their former followers in Spain. Against these disorganised and depleted leftists would have stood the Nationalist army, the very army that had already defeated them and was supported, not as in the Civil War by a small force of German airmen and technicians, but by the full strength of the German Wehrmacht whose armoured divisions were within a few hours of Madrid.

A military case so clearly in favour of non-intervention had only to be put, to be accepted. When I explained it to a large meeting in the House of Commons, composed of all three parties, not a critic was found against it. It was the same at my meetings with the press, and in contacts with my Chelsea constituents. On all hands it was agreed that our position was too serious for misplaced prejudices to compromise our military operations. We were not attempting to placate Franco, or any section of Spaniards. Our Spanish policy was based upon the sole consideration of what was best for our own military operations.

If my speeches in the House of Commons and Chelsea did something to clarify the position, one of them, at Reading University, of which I am Chancellor, seemed to impress public opinion for wider reasons. I attempted to describe in it the terrible effects of fear as I had seen them in Spain and personified in the many refugees who had come through Madrid.

It was a theme to which I constantly recurred in subsequent years, together with its inevitable corollary, the need to drive

out fear by the re-establishment of personal liberty and the recovery of human rights. I had seen in the raw the devastating effect of fear on human nature, and I felt it my bounden duty to tell my friends in England of a tragic state of affairs that differed so completely from their own well-ordered life.

It will be realised from this account of my first visit to London that my time at home was fully occupied. The notes that I have kept, show that over and above the meetings that I have described, I visited more than a hundred ministers, officials and public men. If the real benefit of a holiday or leave, is a change of activity, I had plenty of it in the contrast between nervous, defeatist Madrid, and the regular, ceaseless efficient throbbing of the great war machine in London.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WE LEFT England on November 6th refreshed and encouraged by our stay in London.

Until the autumn of 1944 the British air line did not go further than Lisbon. Whilst the break lengthened the journey into two or three days, it gave me the chance of comparing views with our Ambassadors in Portugal, first Sir Walford Selby and subsequently Sir Ronald Campbell, and of having several interesting interviews with Dr. Salazar. What always struck me in these talks was the Spanish ignorance of Portugal and the Portuguese ignorance of Spain. The two countries, though divided from each other by no apparent frontier, might have been at the respective ends of the earth for all they knew of each other. Each was suspicious and contemptuous of its neighbour and each was susceptible to any damaging rumour or propaganda that disparaged the other. Spaniards continued to believe the German story that British forces were landing in Portugal; Portuguese were not less certain that a German army had already entered Spain.

With Dr. Salazar I had the first of many long talks during my visits to Lisbon. I had met in the last thirty years most of the leading statesmen of the continent. When I think of their various qualities and characteristics and try to classify them, I place Dr. Salazar very high in the list of those who left a lasting impression upon me. Although their political views were widely divergent, and the one was a Latin Catholic and the other a Slav anti-clerical, I would compare Salazar for singleness of purpose and simplicity of life with President Masaryk. Both were political ascetics, concentrated mind and body upon the service of their countries. Both lived the plainest of lives, indifferent and indeed hostile to any ostentation, luxury or personal gain. When I visited Dr. Salazar and the unguarded door was opened by his only maid, or by himself if she were out, I was reminded of a visit to Lani near Prague where I lived for some days in the intimacy of Masaryk's domestic circle. Masaryk's was the conversation of an almost omniscient philosopher who had never lost contact with the hard facts of life. Thought and action were never out of step in his inspiring career. Salazar's knowledge of

Europe was encyclopædic, but it was the knowledge of a student rather than of a public man who had moved widely about the world. It was this academic approach to the crude problems of the war that made him sometimes seem unresponsive to Allied requests. Being a man of one idea—the good of his country—he was convinced that the slightest step from the narrow path of neutrality would endanger the work of national regeneration to which he had devoted the whole of his public life. With a mind so intensely set on the economic progress of Portugal, he seemed to see his life's work endangered by the British blockade. To suggest, however, that his hesitations were even remotely due to his sympathy with Nazism would be as unjust as it would be untrue. He detested Hitler and all his works. His corporative state he sincerely believed to be fundamentally different from Nazism and Fascism. Those who see in it an imitation of the work of Hitler and Mussolini should study the fundamental differences between the three régimes and ask themselves the simple question—what is a suitable system for a country that for years on end turned a so-called parliamentary government into a scandal of instability, inefficiency and corruption?

I must not, however, be deflected from the account of my talks with the Doctor into a disquisition on the unsuitability of the British parliamentary system for most continental countries. It is sufficient to say that Salazar never left a doubt in my mind as to his desire for a Nazi defeat, or his unshakable belief in the fundamental principles of European civilisation. What a contrast between my talks with this learned and impressive thinker who seemed part professor, part priest, part recluse, and with Franco the lucky and complacent staff officer whose political education seemed to have begun and ended with the Spanish Civil War!

Once back in Madrid I made it my business to spread the story of the British effort that we had seen at first hand in England. I made a series of speeches to the Allied diplomats in Madrid, the staff of the Embassy and the British communities in various cities in which I described British steadfastness and confidence.

Serrano Suñer, who seemed for the first time to take an occasional interest in British affairs, asked me several questions about my visit. Franco, on the other hand, showed no desire to see me. If a man is once convinced that all his actions are inspired from heaven, there is no point in asking the opinions of anyone on earth.

The rest of the year brought us many grave anxieties. November and December were very dark months in Madrid.

Within a few days of our return we heard on November 14th of the sinking of *Ark Royal*. To my wife and myself the loss of this historic and almost mythical ship meant the end of an enthralling chapter of our lives. Week after week, in 1936 I had watched the progress of the ship's construction from the Board Room of the Admiralty. Admiral Sir Reginald Henderson, one of the best Sea Lords who had ever superintended the design and building of the fleet, would put the "legend of the ship" on the table and explain to me the progress that was being made with her construction. It was the first aircraft carrier that we had ever built, and it was to embody the results of years of research and experience. Her armour was to be heavier and speed greater than in any other carrier in the world. When in course of time the great ship was ready for launching, I had taken the Admiralty yacht *Enchantress* to Birkenhead for the actual ceremony. How well I remembered the great day! A crowd of 30,000 men and women waiting to see the first big ship of war that had been launched for twelve years; my wife's words as she broke the bottle on the hull to name this ship *Ark Royal*: "May God guide her and guard and keep all who sail in her," and finally the slow movement of the leviathan into the water.

Since then, we had never lost touch with the ship. My wife had visited her before her first commission and presented her with a gift of silver and received in return the ship's ribbon. I had been with King Edward VIII. when he spoke to 3000 naval ratings of the Home Fleet in her huge hangar. During my Spanish mission I had visited her at Gibraltar and heard from Captain Holland, Captain Maund and Admiral Somerville the thrilling story of her charmed life. She had seemed to us and to many of our friends in Spain the very embodiment of British strength and courage in the Mediterranean.

The Portuguese Ambassador was the first to condole with us on our loss. Like many of his fellow countrymen, he was a man of the sea who loved ships and almost worshipped the Royal Navy. *Hood* and *Ark Royal* had always been his naval ideals. Both had been sunk. He spoke of them as if he had lost two members of his own family.

While we were still mourning *Ark Royal*, on December 8th came the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. The Japanese and Germans in Madrid were jubilant. The destruction

of the American fleet, for so they described it, seemed to them far more important than the entry of the United States into the war. The Japanese Minister had already made Madrid the European centre of the Japanese secret service. His staff was a veritable army and the funds at his disposal almost inexhaustible. Subsequent events, I am glad to say, were to show that although he had on his pay-roll senior members of the Spanish Diplomatic Service, and one at least of Serrano Suñer's official entourage, and spent immense sums on secret service, his judgment and information were equally bad. When I heard the news of Pearl Harbour, I congratulated myself on the fact that I had recently circumvented a journey that he was bent on making to London. While still neutral he had tried to ingratiate himself with me with the obvious purpose of obtaining a visa. He had, for instance, ostentatiously been the first visitor to buy pictures at an exhibition of Cathleen Mann's portraits that we held in the Embassy. All his efforts had been useless. There was never a place for him on the aeroplane.

Serrano Suñer was as wrong about the results of Pearl Harbour as the Japanese Minister. He also seemed to think that it was a decisive victory for the Axis. In any case, he ordered the staff of his Ministry to leave cards of congratulation on the Japanese Legation on the day following the outrage.

There was yet a third grave event before the end of the year. Three days after Pearl Harbour came the staggering news of the loss of *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*. My old friend Tom Phillips had gone down with his ship, and our eastern empire seemed to be at the mercy of the Japanese. Our naval prestige, the greatest asset that we still possessed in Europe, and indeed our only asset until we gained superiority in the air, had received a smashing blow.

The enemy propagandists had been given a story that seemed unanswerable. Was it not now clear that fleets were antiquated and useless? Was not the East, the source of indispensable supplies, now closed to the Allied cause? Was not the British Empire, that had depended on the Navy, breaking up? These were the questions that were re-echoed through Spain. For the moment there was no answer but the old one: "We always win in the end."

The Germans in Madrid were daily becoming more truculent. Helped by their obedient agents in the Falange, their set purpose was to make life intolerable for the Allies. The campaign started against the Allied missions in Madrid whose countries had been

occupied by the Germans. When the German Ambassador protested against their continued recognition, Serrano Suñer at once withdrew their diplomatic privileges and subjected their ministers to every kind of slight and annoyance.

The heat was then turned upon us. Our servants, as we discovered, were being bribed and threatened by mysterious agents to make them spy upon us and the people who came to see us. My wife's masseuse was arrested as she left the house and thrown into prison where in spite of my repeated protests she was left untried for eighteen months.

Goebbels' *Das Reich*, a paper widely circulated and read in Madrid, was particularly venomous in its attacks on me. The *mot d'ordre* was evidently to drive me out of Spain. These are the words of its Madrid correspondent on November 16th:

"As Ambassador, Sir Samuel Hoare has during the last eighteen months applied all possible tactical methods which are at his country's disposal, and he is turning to good use in Spain to-day his rich experience in unseen 'agents' warfare' which he collected in Moscow during the world war. Since his arrival there has been a remarkable increase in mysterious explosions in Spanish military munition depots, in railway accidents which upset the transport system and disturb distribution, and also in unexplained fires, which have broken out. The Spanish Government were recently obliged to apply summary military law in the case of railway sabotage. Hoare is master of the tactics by which Spain is to be economically weakened through an elastic policy applied with expert methods. At the same time means of direct pressure are not wanting in certain circles which are believed to be sympathetic to England's wishes. Though Sir Samuel Hoare is not a Roman Catholic he is assiduous in visiting bishops, kissing episcopal rings and kneeling in the dim light of Spanish churches. There is also no lack of forged documents regarding alleged religious persecution in Germany which are distributed liberally among the Spanish clergy. At the same time, he is busy with the opposite-minded elements of the Spanish people. Since the 22nd June those circles which, during the Civil War, stood in the Bolshevik camp, have become more accessible to him. And so Hoare juggles with many balls in Madrid; aristocracy, clergy, economic obstruction, sabotage and Bolshevik activities. All appear to him

equally useful means in his fight against the Falange State, which he at the same time is trying to bind, certainly without result, by means of any easily granted concessions which may come to hand."

It was in this atmosphere of personal attack and national disaster that the year ended. The clouds were threatening and heavy. If any flicker of light broke through them, it was in Africa where we seemed for the time being to be holding our own, and on the western front where the alliance of Russian doggedness and Russian winter was just beginning to revive the memories of 1812.

CHAPTER TWELVE

I HAVE NOW reached 1942, the turning point in my mission. The African landing was to test the accuracy of the reports that I was sending to London, and the wisdom of the policy that the British Government was pursuing in Spain. Before, however, I trace in detail the course of Spanish events in this critical year, I must turn aside to describe the machine that I was attempting to work in Madrid.

Eighteen months of hard experience had taught my staff and myself many useful lessons, for month after month we had been forced to fight defensive and often delaying actions. Apart from official telegrams, our communications with London had been both slow and precarious, with the result that we often had to trust to our own judgment in meeting the hostile situations suddenly created by Falange and Nazi attacks. Our position was indeed beset with so many dangers that without unity of front and unity of command we could not have successfully held it. This requirement may seem to be so obvious as not to be worth mentioning. Far from it. Divided action and dissipated energy are constant dangers in diplomatic missions. Unless a continuous effort is made to hold together the work of an Embassy, there is grave risk of its losing its influence, and disintegrating into watertight sections, each with its own policy. I had seen something of this danger during the last war when I had worked in close association with our Embassies in Petrograd and Rome. In both cases, departmentalism weakened the work of two excellent and experienced Ambassadors. The weakness was not the fault of any individual. It was inevitable, unless vigorous action was taken against it, in any attempt to graft on a small diplomatic staff a large number of technical experts who owed their primary allegiance to different offices in Whitehall.

The service attachés, for instance, would be inclined to regard themselves as in, but not of the Embassy. Intelligence officials would be particularly isolationist. Important branches of the mission would be ignorant of each other's programme, whilst the Chancery, instead of being the nerve centre of a multifarious organisation, would be left stranded on the outskirts of a field almost entirely occupied by the technicians.

If this separatism had existed in Madrid between 1940 and 1942, we could never have held our own against the forces that were arrayed against us. From the very beginning of my mission, therefore, we adopted a system based on my experiences in the War Cabinet. All the heads of the civil and military departments met in my room every morning and discussed with me not so much their own sectional details as the general position and the collective action to be taken for the next twenty-four hours. I would, for instance, give the meeting full accounts of any important interviews that I might have had with Franco, Serrano Suñer or other Ministers. We would study the latest instructions from London and consider how best to support them not only with specific representations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but with joint pressure upon other departments of the Spanish Government. We would discuss the various rumours that the Germans were spreading, and agree upon the best line to circumvent them.

These daily meetings were an essential factor in the work of the mission. They kept the Chancery and myself fully informed of the plans of the various departmental representatives and they enabled us to speak with one voice to the Spaniards. It was to some purpose that I had been a member of many Cabinets and had taken to heart Melbourne's parting words to his colleagues, "For God's sake, gentlemen, let us say the same thing."

It was, however, a good deal more than saying the same thing. Our continuous co-operation made us think on the same lines. When, therefore, I write in these memoirs in the first person singular, I do so for convenience and for no egoistical reason. The policy of the Madrid Embassy was not the personal policy of the Ambassador. It was of course the policy of His Majesty's Government, but it was also the joint policy of the senior staff in Spain. Any success that may have been achieved was a joint success of the whole Embassy.

It is on this account that I was so deeply indebted to my colleagues. They gave me in several cases the benefit of long experience in Spain, in others, the technical knowledge of the war machine in London.

My second in command, Arthur Yencken, was the very man whom I would have chosen to be at my side during the changes and chances that encompassed us. He was one of the two or three Australians who had joined the British Diplomatic Service. In the last war he had proved himself an artillery officer of great

courage and ability. His subsequent work, particularly in Berlin, had marked him out for a distinguished career in diplomacy. Perhaps it was a combination of his Australian origin and his army training that took him to unconventional paths and varied interests outside the beaten track of most young diplomats. When he was in the Washington Embassy, he spent his leave in a bank in order to study American business methods. In Berlin he devoted himself to an intensive investigation of the metallurgical industry, in order to understand the foundations of German rearmament. His inquiring and very methodical mind was equally active in Spain. He was there to know everyone and to understand everything. There was no individual or detail too insignificant for his attention if he was on the track of any information or contact that might be useful to the Embassy. Being as agreeable as he was efficient, he was liked by all sorts and conditions of Spaniards. Moreover, he had brought off a double event that is not always won by public men. He had married a wife who in the friendships that she gained and the wide circle that she built up around them, played a notable part in the success of his work.

It can well be understood how invaluable he and she were to my wife and myself. They both knew the world of Madrid. He knew also the ways of the Foreign Office, sometimes so inscrutable to the layman. Most important of all, he had a war mind that understood that a world crisis necessitated resolute and often unconventional action. Upon such a second in command I constantly depended. How constantly, I only realised to the full when he was killed in an air accident in May, 1944. A heavy loss to me, a loss even heavier for the service that so greatly needed his remarkable qualities.

Whilst all the service attachés gave me unstinted help, two of them, Brigadier Torr and Captain Hilgarth, were able to base it on long years of experience in Spain. Both were very popular with their Spanish colleagues in the army and navy, and both had an unsurpassed knowledge of the military and naval conditions of Spain. Brigadier Torr's many army contacts stood him in especially good stead in the almost endless negotiations that we had over escaped prisoners of war. Being very popular in Spanish society he was able to open for us many friendly doors in Madrid.

Captain Hilgarth, the embodiment of drive, was a veritable sleuth on the track of enemy submarines in Spanish waters. He

also gave us valuable contacts that effectively helped at critical moments.

I was fortunate also in having on my staff one of the coming young men of the Treasury. My many years in Whitehall had not failed to impress me with the mass of wisdom accumulated in Treasury Chambers. I had sometimes knocked my head against it, when as head of a Service ministry, I was fighting for my estimates. The officials, being a *corps d'elite* and the best informed in Whitehall, usually had their way in the end. Indeed they formed one of the three institutions most difficult to defeat; the British Treasury, the Miners' Federation and the Vatican.

With this experience to guide me, I arranged for Mr. Hugh Ellis Rees, the Treasury representative, to be not only Financial Adviser to the Embassy but to be the chief of its whole economic organisation. All the various activities in Spain of the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Economic Warfare, the Ministries of Food and War Transport were co-ordinated under his guidance. I assign to this arrangement much of the success of our economic negotiations with the Spanish Government, the more so, as they were inspired by a rare mixture of ability and common sense on the part of Mr. Ellis Rees.

If I mention any other name, it must be that of Mr. Bernard Malley, the assistant chief of the press department. Mr. Bernard Malley had the same love and knowledge of Spain that Brown had of Persia and Doughty of Arabia. Another such friend I had found in Petrograd, where Harold Williams, afterwards foreign editor of *The Times*, loved Russia and was loved of Russians as Don Bernardo, to call Mr. Malley by the name known to his many friends, loved Spain and was loved of Spaniards. To win such a position in a foreign country, it is necessary to be very sympathetic and very sensitive. Mr. Malley's sympathy and sensibility gained everyone's heart. He usually went with me on my journeys about the country. There was not a village that he did not know or an interesting man or woman who was not his friend. Although he had been a professor in the ecclesiastical university of the Escorial and had been imprisoned by the Reds in the notorious cheka of the Calle Serrano, his natural love of tolerance and liberty never allowed him to be bitter or to ignore the faults of his own side. With unerring instinct he could gauge the tendencies of a movement or the actions of an individual, whilst his many friendships in almost every walk of Spanish life

provided unique sources of information that would otherwise have been closed to me.

His departmental duties were in the press office where, under the vigorous direction of Mr. Tom Burns, an insignificant section of the Embassy's work developed into a great and imposing organisation.

The difficulties of the press department were typical of the troubles that crowded upon us. When we started our work, the Germans were in complete possession of the field. Serrano Suñer, who controlled the press and propaganda of the Spanish Government, publicly boasted that they were parts of Goebbels' master machine. Every kind of obstacle was put in the way of our activities. A decree was passed prohibiting all propaganda by foreign agencies. Although never carried into effect against the Germans, it was rigidly enforced against us. The press department was frequently surrounded by police and visitors interrogated, assaulted or imprisoned. Our messengers were attacked in the streets, our books and papers from the Ministry of Information intercepted and confiscated, our correspondence with the Consulates never delivered. The police in the provincial cities followed the lead of Madrid. Our Spanish friends visiting the British Consulates were treated as suspects and frequently assaulted. My staff and I incessantly protested. The only result was the stock answer that these Spaniards had not been maltreated and imprisoned because they were friends of England, but because they were dangerous revolutionaries for whom the police had long been searching. A lie of this kind is the common currency of totalitarian régimes. The Spanish Government made regular use of it.

The most protracted battle took place over a sheet that was known as our *Bulletin*. Under the decree, no propaganda was permitted to be sent to any but a limited and approved list of Spanish Ministers and senior officials. The fact that the Germans turned this official list into a general circulation that ran into hundreds of thousands, made no difference to the restrictions imposed on us. We were not, however, to be defeated by this flagrant differentiation. We accordingly drew a clear distinction between our propaganda and our news. So far as direct propaganda was concerned, we husbanded our resources for great occasions and for better opportunities of making use of it. For the straight news, however, we made every effort to spread it from one end of Spain to the other. It was the news that chiefly

mattered. Propaganda had been so overdone by the Germans that it was already discredited. The news, particularly when our fortunes took a turn for the better, was far more effective than pamphlets and leaflets with an obviously ulterior motive under every line. The method that we adopted was to produce twice daily a bulletin of the B.B.C. news and to circulate it widely in Madrid and the principal cities. The demand for the sheet was unlimited. Crowds, sometimes embarrassingly great, gathered round the press department at the hours of distribution. The copies, once distributed, passed from hand to hand, and sold for sums as high as twenty pesetas each in the black market. The result was an effective circulation far greater than that of any Spanish newspaper, and a reading public that at last had the opportunity of believing what it read. Our military communiqués, in particular, that hitherto had been mutilated or suppressed in the Spanish press, were eagerly read from one end of Spain to the other.

The Falange and the Germans did their utmost to stop the *Bulletin*. Serrano Suñer declared that it was illegal. I replied that as it only contained news that had already been broadcast by the B.B.C. and heard by Spanish listeners in Spain, it was not propaganda in the sense of the decree. My case was not affected by the fact that the Falange, by jamming our broadcasts and seizing radio sets made it very difficult for any Spaniard to hear our transmissions. In theory the Spanish Government had not prohibited our broadcasts. Serrano Suñer, who seemed nervous of going to the length of prohibition, continued to demand the *Bulletin's* suppression. We on our side continued to argue for month after month and year after year, and while we argued, we maintained the *Bulletin* and quadrupled its circulation.

Nor were we inactive in other fields. Although the main road of propaganda was blocked, there were still by-passes open to us. In a country where there was no free and responsible press, conversation had an exceptionally strong influence on the making of opinion. As we all said the same thing, our talk had a definite effect, particularly some of the "chistes," the Spanish vintage of *bons mots* and Pasquinades, that Arthur Yencken sent on their way through Madrid. This kind of by-pass propaganda was especially effective when the Spaniards were themselves thinking on the same lines. For it is surely the most effective of all propaganda that the people for whom it is designed should adopt it, as their own, and themselves carry it on. This was particularly the case

in our main battle against the fundamental principle of Nazism. The Nazi doctrine of racialism ran counter to the essential belief of every devout Catholic in Spain. It was only necessary to spread abroad the story of Nazi racialism for nine Spaniards out of ten to attack it as the unforgivable sin.

By these means and in the face of innumerable disadvantages we succeeded in keeping Spaniards informed of what was happening in the war. With the spread of news increased the will to resist a German invasion, and with the people's will to resist, increased also Franco's reluctance to risk an unpopular war.

The more I consider these critical years, the more I am sure that the work of the British Embassy, focused and united on certain definite objectives, was an important factor in stopping the drift to the Axis. This is how, after describing the complexities of the Spanish scene, I expressed this conclusion in a letter to London on February 24th.

"I can well imagine that my friends in London will be growing weary of these tangled details. Let me, therefore, bring them back to the simple issues that, emerging from clouds of obscurity, are of real importance to the conduct of the war. First and foremost then, there is the fact, made more and more clear by the moves and counter-moves of the last two months, that Spain does not want to be drawn into the war. You will remember that I came to Spain with one object and one alone, to help to keep Spain out of the war. Strategically we were not prepared to risk the loss of the Atlantic ports, Gibraltar and the African coast. As I understand it, it is still the policy of the Government to keep Spain out of the war. The steady growth, therefore, of Spanish opposition to the entry of German troops is, I suggest, a fact of real importance.

"The second fact I mention with great hesitation for the obvious reason that it may be interpreted wrongly. I feel it, however, due to my staff to say that never would this aversion to war have developed as it has in Spain without their conscious, continuous and carefully organised efforts. The Spaniards, left to themselves, would never have realised the German danger to Spain. Being incredibly irresponsible, having no leaders, and being almost anarchist in the wildness of their action, they might easily have drifted into some warlike adventure for the capture of Gibraltar. I claim that

in addition to our economic policy, we have been able to give the Spaniards something else they needed, direction along the right road, and to give it them day by day and hour by hour, not as the Germans have given it to them, in *Diktats*, but as friends who have tried to understand their personal characteristics and their national history and have advised them for their own good. This anti-war feeling we have sowed on the fertile Spanish ground of xenophobia. A good harvest has grown upon it. If the weather is good and the war goes better, the next crop may well be better still. For the xenophobia that has now turned against the heavy-footed Germans may become an anglophilia that will pull Spain out of the Axis and help it towards normal life and humane government. In the meanwhile we will continue ceaselessly to work in every possible way upon the Spanish desire for peace, dislike of the Germans and growing doubts of a German victory. Without this pressure, exercised in every direction, economic, political, social and especially economic, 'line upon line, here a little, there a little,' we should never have seen so great a change in Spanish opinion. With it, provided only that the war goes reasonably well for us, and provided also that we maintain our economic policy in co-operation with the United States Government, we have, in my opinion, a good chance of keeping Spain out of the Axis, perhaps indeed a better chance than at any time in the last two years."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE PRIME MINISTER had told me in my last talk with him that 1942 would be "the high light in my career." He meant of course that a second front would be opened during the year, and that wherever it was, Spain would be strategically in the limelight. My talks in London and the confidential communications that I received at the beginning of the year pointed more and more clearly to Africa as the scene of our intended offensive. Whether, however, it was to be Africa or France or the central Mediterranean, my task was to keep Spain clear of the Axis, and to do everything in my power to prevent German threats to our communications in the western Mediterranean.

Whilst there was no doubt about the importance of Spain, there were many uncertainties at the beginning of 1942 about the possibilities of a successful offensive. "The high light" of which Mr. Churchill spoke was very slow in showing itself. Indeed, for the first half of the year the surrounding atmosphere was dim often to the point of murky darkness.

Hitler also realised that the year was the turning point in the war. "It would again be a year of great victories," he had confidently boasted in his New Year message to the German people. The course of events seemed to justify his claim. The surrender of Singapore on February 15th was the first of a series of disasters that culminated in the loss of Tobruk on June 21st. The waves of Japanese invasion were submerging the Far East, and our communications through the Mediterranean were virtually severed. This was a sombre background from which to expect any high light, and a dangerous setting in which to ensure a peaceful Spain during the impending offensive.

Under the influence of German successes, the Spanish Government seemed to be moving from non-belligerency into the pre-belligerency that had been Mussolini's last stage before entering the war against us. Serrano Suñer's star was at the zenith, and Franco was repeating to every one whom he saw, that the Allies had lost the war.

As evidence of this dangerous drift, the Spanish Blue Division were already on the Russian front. I did my best to convince Serrano Suñer of the inevitable complications and dangers that

would be created by a Spanish unit fighting against an Allied army. But he and Franco would not listen to any of my arguments. Franco fell back upon the assertion that there were now two wars, and that it was safe and legitimate for Spain to take part in the crusade against Russia without being embroiled in hostilities with the western Allies. Serrano Suñer, who was undoubtedly contemplating war with the Allies on the western as well as on the eastern front, did not trouble himself with such casuistical distinctions. He regarded the Blue Division as his child, whose growth he intended to foster in every possible way. It looked, however, at first as if the child's growth would be stunted from the start. The volunteers to whom the appeal of a crusade against Bolshevism had been made, were not forthcoming. Most Spaniards had already had enough of fighting in the Civil War. Serrano Suñer, however, being a totalitarian minister, was not to be deterred by the personal inclinations of individual Spaniards. Army orders were, therefore, issued under which whole batches of serving troops were transferred to the Division without the men concerned having any effective choice in the matter. Members of the Falange, some of them voluntarily, more, however, under orders, also joined the unit. The only section of genuine volunteers was a limited number of young men in search of adventure, who had grown up during the Civil War and never settled down into normal life. The combined result was an army unit of about 17,000 men and an air detachment of two or three flights. The report circulated in the Allied press that the division was composed of criminals from the prisons was not accurate, nor was it true to suggest that the men fought badly when they reached the front. The Division undoubtedly had a miserable time. Isolated on a remote section of the northern front, neglected by the Germans and badly equipped in spite of German promises, its strength swiftly diminished. The men's families were given no news, even of casualties, and although collections of food and wine were made in Spain for despatch to the front, very few parcels ever reached the Division. It would be unjust to suggest that the misguided young men who composed this unfortunate unit were cowards or criminals. They were nothing of the kind. Considering their conditions of service they fought surprisingly well. Their presence on the Russian front was due solely and only to Serrano Suñer's determination to be at war with Russia.

It was also part of his policy to send large numbers of Spanish

workmen to Germany. Spain was to keep in step with the occupied countries of the continent, and provide German industry and agriculture with the foreign labour that was so urgently required. In theory, there was to be no actual levy and the recruitment of Spanish labour was to be voluntary. In practice, employers and workers were left no choice. Officials from the Falange Ministry of Labour drew up lists of the men whom they wanted from a particular firm or industry, and the men were sent off to Germany regardless of their value to the economic life of Spain. The levy of Spanish labour, particularly of skilled labour at a time when so little skilled labour was available in the country, would have led to very grave consequences if it had been allowed to continue unchecked. Fortunately, however, Carceller, the vigorous Minister of Commerce and Industry, intervened and succeeded in reducing the exodus to about 20,000 workers. Even so, the loss of this labour seriously damaged Spanish economy, and was particularly harmful to British undertakings such as the Rio Tinto Company where the levy was applied with special rigour.

The Blue Division and the Labour Levy were unmistakable evidence of Serrano Suñer's power, and of Franco's move towards what he believed to be the winning side. On February 14th, he left no one in doubt as to his wish for an Axis victory. He was speaking in the Alcazar in Seville to a large meeting of army officers, when he categorically declared that "for twenty years Germany had been the defender of European civilisation. If," he continued, "the road to Berlin were opened then not merely would one division of Spaniards participate in the struggle, but one million Spaniards would be offered to help." This pledge, though it was not published in Germany, was circulated through Spain with all the publicity at the disposal of a totalitarian press and radio. Whilst no one could imagine how it could ever have been carried into effect, everyone was convinced that Franco was now taking a more definite side in the war.

The position, however, was not as simple as it appeared at first sight. Even if Franco's tortuous mind was now convinced of a German victory, it was not in his nature to move off irrevocably on a clear line of advance. I marked the same characteristic in his nature upon the occasion of every great crisis during my mission. Within a few moments of setting his boats alight, he would be fetching water for extinguishing the fire. I would guess that in this case further consideration made him realise that the fire was

not so much of his making as Serrano Suñer's. It was his brother-in-law who had stirred it up in recent weeks, and thrown into the blaze the Blue Division and the Labour Levy. It was his brother-in-law who was monopolising the public interest by his melodramatic visits to the Axis capitals and his blatant advertisement of his own doings in Spain. *Führers*, *Duces* and *Caudillos* do not like being pushed off the front of the stage. In the early weeks of 1942 Serrano Suñer was keeping the spotlight on his own steps while Franco was left in the dim obscurity of the wings. The result was that many Spaniards were beginning to believe that it was the brother-in-law who governed, and the Caudillo who reigned as a *roi fainéant*.

Be this as it may, there could clearly be traced from the middle of February until the end of the summer a gradual process under which Franco succeeded in pushing Serrano Suñer into the background, and in creating the general feeling that his brother-in-law's days were numbered. Here again, he was acting true to type. Events were following their usual course. Once more Franco was moving with cautious cunning. The curtain of rumour was being drawn over his intended victim. While no one had previously dared to say a word against the Caudillo's brother-in-law, the world and Madrid were now openly talking of an impending change in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was indeed evident that the Franco technique for the elimination of ministers was being applied to Serrano Suñer.

From February onwards it was Franco and not Serrano Suñer who took the front of the stage. When the Caudillo met Salazar in Seville, it was Franco who did the talking, and did it in his native Gallego that Salazar could understand. When the conversation ended, it was Franco who monopolised the credit for the improved Spanish relations with neutral Portugal. When a few weeks later, the Caudillo made a state visit to Catalonia and Aragón, he went without Serrano Suñer and posed as the one man who had saved Catalan industry from the devastation of war. Significantly, also, he at the same time insisted upon the fact that the Falange was the essential basis of his régime. I do not think that he would have made this latter claim in a city like Barcelona where the Falange was notoriously unpopular, if he had not intended to make it clear to the world that the Falange was his own organisation and in no way under the control of his brother-in-law. He may also have wished to prepare the Germans for a possible change in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to

convince them that as he alone governed, the departure of their old friend would change neither his policy nor the Falange, the instrument with which he carried it out.

Signs such as these showed clearly the way that the wind was blowing. Franco was not prepared to be rushed by Serrano Suñer along the road that led so quickly to the war front. He was determined to take his own time, and in the meanwhile to show himself to be master in his own house. He had taken to heart the wise injunction that Stendhal had laid down for a ruling prince: "*Il faut aimer sa place. Si tu es roi, aime ton sceptre.*"

This interplay of family jealousies had a very definite influence upon the course of events. It prejudiced Franco against Serrano Suñer's schemes of belligerency and consequently helped to prevent awkward developments in Spain that might seriously have compromised the success of the African offensive. Once again in Spanish history personalities counted more than politics. Once again, also, psychology was shown to be indispensable to diplomacy. The study of Franco's character was a sure guide to his future actions.

It was certainly of good augury for the autumn that he was displacing Serrano Suñer in the public eye. When the Minister for Foreign Affairs ceased to occupy the front page of every newspaper, it was a safe deduction that he and his chauvinism were out of favour and that the new chapter would be more cautious than the last.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FOR ALL the outward signs of Franco's reluctance to embroil himself in any adventures, it was not safe for us to stand aside and leave the reaction against Serrano Suñer's policy to work of itself. The Germans were constantly playing on Spanish nerves. Fantastic stories of an immediate German invasion were readily believed even to the detail of Franco having disclosed to Salazar the actual date in the Seville meeting. The Falange persecution of Anglophils continued unchecked.

It was clear, therefore, that if our autumn offensive was not to be endangered by events in Spain, I must use the intervening months for an intensive campaign throughout the country. It was in these circumstances that I applied to my mission the method and technique of a parliamentary constituency in England. Instead of following the conventional habit of restricting an Ambassador's activities to the capital, I moved about from centre to centre as if I were visiting the outlying wards and scattered electors of a large constituency. In a country where the individualism of provinces was so extreme as to be scarcely distinguishable from separatism, these visits to the great provincial cities were of paramount importance. Not only were the provinces more definitely anglophil than Madrid, but their industries were to a great extent dependent upon British and American trade. Barcelona looked for its raw cotton to the United States, Egypt and the British Empire. The heavy industry of Bilbao had been built up by British brains and British machinery. Seville and Valencia had found their chief market for oranges in the United Kingdom, whilst the wine trade of Jerez had for generations been in British and semi-British hands.

The result was a widespread goodwill towards the British cause and a body of influential sympathisers in almost every provincial centre whose help was invaluable in leading public opinion along safe lines.

During the first six months of 1942 we were both constantly on the road or in the air visiting these key centres. The distances we covered were very great. The size of Spain is sometimes forgotten. From Madrid it is some 400 miles to Barcelona and Corunna and 500 miles to Gibraltar. As the trains were entirely

undependable, it was necessary to travel by road or air, and usually by road, for the sudden changes of weather over the Sierras and the lack of meteorological reports made flying too dangerous except on rare occasions.

Our practice was to go by easy stages and to stop from time to time on the way, not only to see the beauties and treasures of the smaller towns, but also to visit the local leaders such as the bishops and the military and civil governors. In the larger cities we would spend several days. Barcelona and Seville, the capitals of Catalonia and Andalusia, we regularly visited every few months.

The notes that I made at the time describe in detail our experiences. Here, for instance, are some of our typical activities in Barcelona in the first fortnight of April.

Our strongest impression was of the change in the atmosphere since our first visit in July, 1940. Instead of nervousness and suspicion, we everywhere found an undisguised desire to entertain us. Instead of a Civil Governor definitely hostile to the British community, we found an able and unprejudiced official who wished within his lights to act justly towards all sections under his charge.

The Governor, Señor Correa Veglison, immediately impressed me as a remarkable man. My subsequent meetings with him confirmed this first impression. A strange vicissitude of fortune had already associated us. For it so happened that when I was First Lord of the Admiralty during the Spanish Civil War, Marcus Samuel, a Conservative colleague in the House of Commons, had asked me to do what I could to rescue an old lady of eighty at Santander whose life was in danger. The Royal Navy, whose record in the Civil War was one of splendid and impartial rescue work for thousands of Spaniards, saved the old lady. It now transpired that the refugee brought off from Santander in H.M.S. *London* was the governor's mother.

Apart from this personal bond, Señor Corrêa seemed to me to be an administrator of exceptional ability who stood out in marked contrast from the ranks of the Falange fanatics who almost everywhere were the Civil Governors. Although he wore a blue shirt and was high in the party hierarchy, he did not hesitate to suppress the activities of the Falange gunmen. In spite of the party's unpopularity in Catalonia and of the notorious lawlessness of Barcelona, he moved freely about the city unguarded, and without any of the usual Falange ceremonial. The Catalans, usually so hostile to strangers, liked this traditionalist

from Santander. They saw that he stood up for their interests, when at the risk of embroiling himself with the central government, he prohibited the export of their meagre foodstocks to other provinces. In the Paralelo, the Alsatia of Barcelona, there was more order under his rule than for many years past.

In another respect he differed from other civil governors. He was very well read not only in Spanish, German and French, but also in English literature. For Chesterton in particular he had an unbounded admiration. In token of our common love of books, I gave him a complete collection of his favourite author, and he as an erudite student of Cervantes gave me a facsimile of the first edition of *Don Quixote*.

The business world of Barcelona was anglophil almost to a man, and many were the friends that we made amongst its captains of industry. The British community formed an important part of it. Its members, although they still numbered some hundreds, were only a remnant of what it had been before the Civil War and the chapter of Falange autarchy that followed it. They had passed through a period of anxiety and persecution. Several of them, no doubt at German instigation, had been expelled from Spain and others had orders of expulsion hanging over their heads. Their worst chapter, however, was over, and with Correa as Governor there were fewer instances of persecution. My wife and I did everything that we could to encourage them with meetings, social gatherings and speeches about the progress of the war.

Next, there were the two important elements of the army and the church to be considered.

The post of Captain General of Catalonia is one of the most important in the Spanish army. General Orgaz held it when we first visited the city, a resolute and rather irascible soldier, who through his political ignorance subsequently caused us considerable trouble in Tangier. His successor, General Kindelán, was a different type—a careful student of military strategy and political history who had already passed through a period of belief in German invincibility to a conviction that the Allies could never be beaten. The third stage, in which this conviction developed into the certainty of an Allied victory, he was yet to reach. It was to cost him his post as Franco at once withdrew him from the key command of Catalonia and relegated him to the staff college in Madrid. Kindelán was a good friend of ours. He never forgot the Irish origin of his family. His ancestors, like

many others in Spain, had been amongst "the wild geese" from Ireland, and one of them had been a divisional general under the Marqués de la Romana when Napoleon had collected a Spanish contingent in Denmark for the invasion of Russia. His influence was of real value to the Allies in the army circles of the north.

So far as the church in Barcelona was concerned, I could not follow my usual practice of calling on the bishop as there was none at the time. The See had been vacant since the last bishop disappeared in the massacres of the Civil War. The more ancient and historic See of Tarragona was also virtually vacant. Franco, although outwardly so devout a Catholic, refused to allow the Cardinal Archbishop to return to his diocese on the ground that he was a Red. What a significant commentary on the Caudillo's relations with the Vatican! The See of Barcelona left vacant for years owing to his quarrel with the Pope over the nomination of bishops, and a prince of the church refused entry into his own diocese, the second in precedence amongst Spanish Sees, because Franco did not approve of his moderating influence during the Civil War!

As there were no bishops to visit, I had recourse to the regulars and in particular to the Benedictines of the famous Abbey of Montserrat. Benedictine monasteries have a peculiar charm of their own. The spirit of St. Benedict's rule, one of the wisest codes ever composed by man, inspires, illumines and humanises the whole life of the community. Nothing short of the best is thought worthy of their wise and far-seeing founder. The most learned students are found in their ranks, the best plain song in their chapels, the finest collection of books in their libraries. I already knew the Abbot and had promised to give the library, one of the best even among Benedictine libraries, a book that was lacking, an up-to-date English encyclopædia.

It was therefore armed with the volumes of Chambers that we made the giddy ascent to the holy mount that Wagner had taken as the scene of Parsifal.

A long talk with the monks showed how unbridgable was the gulf between St. Benedict's rule and Hitler's new order. Himmler, who had recently visited the monastery, had made the worst possible impression on the community. As the monks had not wanted him, they did not even ask him to sign the distinguished visitor's book, and were greatly relieved when he made his departure. They will never forget his typical remark when he was shown the figure of the miraculous Virgin in whose honour the

monastery was founded. Having looked with the cold eye of the Gestapo chief on the ninth century Madonna, he gave his verdict upon the family's identity. "The Virgin and Child are clearly of Nordic origin." The new order had not changed the humorless pedantry of German bullies.

It was no doubt the contrast between his and my reception that excited the Spanish police against the community. The unfortunate Abbot was ordered to Barcelona where he was closely interrogated about my activities. The preposterous accusation that appeared to be implicitly believed was that I had gone to Montserrat for the purpose of plotting with the Abbot a landing of Allied troops in Rosas Bay. Could spite, folly and fatuity have been pushed further?

Barcelona was not the only centre in the north to which we went during these months. We made, for instance, a round tour of the north-west, taking in our journey Corunna, Compostella and Virgo. At Corunna I laid a wreath on Sir John Moore's monument and arranged for its restoration. The original monument to the great general whose "talents and firmness," in the words of Napoleon, "alone saved the British army from destruction" had been erected in wood by the Spanish General Romana. The Prince Regent had subsequently replaced it in stone, and it is now enclosed by an iron railing in a small garden overlooking the surrounding landscape. Not far off were the graves of some of our seamen and airmen whose bodies had been found in the neighbourhood. I satisfied myself that the bodies had been reverently buried, and that the graves were being cared for by the authorities.

At Vigo, where the cruises of the Royal Navy were still pleasantly remembered, we had a particularly friendly welcome from the authorities.

Compostella we visited not only for its monuments and historical associations but for the fact that many thousands of Spaniards made frequent pilgrimages to the shrine of St. James. This is not the place to write of its beauties—its unique combination of romanesque and baroque, its grey stone and narrow arcades glistening under the rain and sun of the Gallego climate, the portico of the Gloria in the cathedral and the treasures left by generations of pilgrims. I must, however, mention one of the books in the archives that particularly interested us—the guide written by Picot, a fourteenth century Frenchman, for the benefit of foreign pilgrims. No Cook, Baedeker or Guide Bleu could

have given more detailed and accurate information of the inns, the food and general conditions that the pilgrim would meet on his way.

Our visit occasioned no little interest. More than one Spaniard came up and talked to us in the streets. A young medical student from the university sat down at our table when we were lunching in a small inn, and embarked on a panegyric of British institutions. These talks had their value. They put us on the map after a long chapter of Spanish isolation from British affairs.

It was in the course of this journey that we made one of several visits to the most interesting of all English institutions in Spain, the English College of Valladolid. Readers of the *Bible in Spain* will remember the vivid description that protestant Borrow gives of the seventeenth century building and its adventurous history. The college had originally been a Jesuit foundation of Philip II. in Madrid, but when the Order was expelled by Charles III. it was moved to Valladolid and transferred to the secular priesthood. The change, although it transformed the work and policy of the institution, left intact the thrilling memories of Campion and Parsons and the brutal persecutions to which for nearly two centuries the old believers in England were subjected. The cloisters are hung with the portraits of the college martyrs, the chapel is filled with the pictures that the nuns of Syon took to the continent. The archives abound with the records of the mysterious and often fatal missions to England. As I looked at the many volumes so carefully bound and docketed by the Rector, I thought in particular of the devoted sacrifices of many young men from my own county of Norfolk, the Walpoles, Bedingfields and Southwells, who had abandoned the ample life of county families for the danger, torture and cruel death that awaited the mission priests. How splendid a history of heroism could be written from these records, and how despicable a story is hidden in contrast beneath the entry in the College Diary for October 30th, 1677—"Titus Ambrose Vere Oates ob pessimos mores post 4 menses ejectus." Titus Oates had wormed himself into the college as a spy. Unfortunately, when he was expelled for his bad morals he took with him the sheets from the entry book that contained the names of his fellow students. They are the only sheets missing in the college records. They must have been responsible for many denunciations in the savage panic of the Popish Plot.

Apart from these personal histories, one book in the library

especially enthralled me, the life of Doña Luisa de Carvajal, a great Spanish lady who on her own initiative journeyed to England and took up her residence in London for the sole purpose of protecting English Catholics from the persecutions of Archbishop Abbot and the vacillations of James I. Aided by Gondomar, the incomparable Spanish Ambassador at the court of St. James, she was often able to lessen the sufferings of the prisoners and captives in Newgate. Once she was herself thrown into Newgate, and with true Spanish pride, refused to leave it until the Spanish Ambassador arrived with his coach to take her away. Her practice was to visit the prisoners under sentence of death and to spend with them the eve of their execution. Her patience and persistence inspired my much smaller efforts for escaped prisoners of war and persecuted British subjects in Spain.

The college rector, Monsignor Henson, was a patriotic Englishman to the core. Whilst long years of foreign residence denationalises many of our fellow countrymen, in other cases they bring out all that is most national and British in their character. Monsignor Henson had become more English every day of his long life in Spain. He lunched punctually, very punctually, at 1 p.m.; he gloried in the English accent of his excellent Spanish, and when he came to Madrid he discarded his purple cassock for a clerical frock coat that might have come out of a Trollope novel. Another of the same vigorous English strain I had known in Rome where the late Monsignor Stanley was the personification of an ecclesiastical John Bull. I shall never forget his English voice re-echoing through the Sistine chapel just as an impressive ceremony was to begin—"I am fed up with these affairs. It is the third in a month."

Monsignor Henson's English habits and vigorous patriotism pervaded the whole college. The twenty young Englishmen whom he was training for the priesthood had nothing in common with the furtive and anæmic seminarists whom the ignorant would have imagined to be its inmates. When I spoke to them of the course of the war, their flood of questions showed not only their interest in the world outside, but their unshakable confidence in an Allied victory.

Towards the end of my stay in Spain they all departed to be ordained, and owing to the difficulties of travel their places were not filled. That this gap in the unbroken history of the college is only temporary is greatly to be hoped. It is surely good for young English priests to know something of the continental

world and for the continent to have this breath of English air blowing within it. The Anglican Church would have avoided some of its insularity if it had possessed overseas institutions for the training of its priests. The Roman hierarchy will lose an influence of real value if it stops the regular flow of young men to such foundations as this historic college.

I was indeed glad to be the first British Ambassador to stay in the college since Lord Cottington at the end of the seventeenth century. My wife's visit was even more notable. She was the first lady ever to sleep within its high, red, brick walls.

Perhaps, however, the most vivid of our northern visits was to Pampeluna, the capital of Navarre, to which we went at the beginning of July.

Navarre was the home of our best friends in Spain. The Navarrese, who live much upon the romantic history of their small country, remember their Princess Berengaria who was Queen of England, and the years when the British Duchy of Anjou was their adjacent neighbour. As further evidence of the close intimacy between the two countries they show with pride in their provincial museum one of the earliest known manuscripts of the rite of the English Coronation.

The ties between the two countries are, however, more than historic. In the war of 1914 Don Jaime, the Carlist claimant to the Spanish throne, held the rank of Colonel of a Russian cavalry regiment and induced a large section of his followers to take the Allied side. Another section, probably the majority of the party, led by Vasquez Mella and inspired by francophobe and clerical motives, supported Germany. In this war, however, the religious motives that turned them against us in 1914 had brought them almost solidly to our side. It was to encourage their staunch adherence to the Allied cause that I determined to visit Pampeluna, their capital, and that I chose the moment when they needed comfort over the Libyan defeats.

The Navarrese festival of San Firmin provided the occasion. For four days the Navarrese collect in great crowds at Pampeluna, for a non-stop series of bullfights, dancing and religious services. Most notable of these functions is the driving of the bulls early each morning through the streets of the town into the bull-ring—the *encierro* as it is called. Before the bulls run most of the male population of the town yelling with excitement. If the bulls behave peaceably, they gallop through the streets together, cross the bull-ring and go into their stables. If, however, they separate,

they are apt to run amok and attack the crowd. Upon this occasion they behaved well, and there were no accidents.

The hotel was fortunately full at the time of our visit. The result was that we received an invitation to stay with Don Joaquín Baleztena, the military and civil chief of the Traditionalists, and the head of one of the most respected families in Navarre. His house, old and dark, was in the central square, that is to say, in the very midst of the noisy celebrations. His family, for generations the backbone of the Carlist movement, was incredibly numerous. Brothers, sisters, endless nieces and cousins, crowded in upon us night and day—a most impressive company, that would have delighted the heart of Walter Scott. With the puritanism of Covenanters and the romance of Jacobites, they might equally have been the chief characters in *Waverley* or *Old Mortality*. The older men wore on their heads the Navarrese boinas, the red caps whose black counterpart Borotra popularised at Wimbledon, and on their cheeks the side whiskers that are always associated with the Carlist leaders of the last century. Family life was simple and obviously very religious. Members of the family never missed Mass in the morning, or grace at meals. The talk was constantly of the forlorn cause that for more than a century they had so bravely and courageously defended. “God, King and Country,” the motto of Navarre, was more than a cliché for this loyal folk.

Not an hour passed during my visit without some sign of friendship for Great Britain. Indeed, the expressions of goodwill were sometimes almost embarrassing. The processions of dancers, all of them, curiously enough, of men dancers, dressed in white with red sashes, wished to make a special demonstration in my honour outside the Baleztena house. Perhaps even more significant, the star *torero*, a young bullfighter who was putting all the older lights into the shade, offered to dedicate to me his bull in the principal bullfight. I would gladly have accepted both these pleasant and unexpected offers, but after a talk with Señor Baleztena and Mr. Malley I came to the conclusion that the pro-English demonstrations that would certainly have been excited, might be embarrassing for our friends, and even awkward for the British Ambassador. Reluctantly, therefore, I had to refuse.

The sequel was diverting. The land on which the bull-ring was built belonged to an orphanage and gave the children the right to a box. As my friend could not make the presentation to me, he first threw the ears to the children and then presented the

bull to the institution. The children's joy was boundless. When I saw the curious incident I could not help a mental comparison with the sober and dignified prize-givings that I had so often witnessed in English schools. The bull's ears were evidently a prize of almost unimaginable value to these young ladies of four or five.

Having imposed on myself the self-denying ordinance of refusing the bull, I suggested to the *torero* that I would like to make his acquaintance. Accordingly, after a great triumph in the ring, accompanied by his *cuadrilla* he made a visit of state to the Ambassadors and myself in the Baleztena house, where most of the youth and beauty of Pampeluna, dressed in mantillas and high combs, were gathered together to see the dancing in the square. The *torero's* manners were so excellent that throughout the visit he devoted himself to pleasant and dignified talk with our two selves and denied himself the pleasure of brighter conversation with the young ladies in their mantillas. I told him how gratefully I would have accepted his offer and received the bull that he had so brilliantly killed, but that I feared that my acceptance might compromise him in Spanish politics. I added that I could offer him no such present in return, as all that I could do was to give him and his company a few boxes of cigarettes. We promised, however, to exchange signed photographs with each other.

Interspersed with these excitements were interviews with the local authorities, the Civil Governor, the usual type of young Falangista, the Alcalde, who introduced his town council to me, the General, a fervent Monarchist, Count Rodezno, the chairman of the county council, and the leading political figure in Navarre, and the Bishop, one of the most convinced enemies of Nazism in the Spanish episcopate. Of these talks, the most interesting were those with the Bishop and Count Rodezno. The Bishop, whom I already knew, spoke at length of the Nazi threat to Christianity. He was particularly nervous of any attempt to clamp down National Socialism on Spain, declaring that if such an attempt were made, it would be the duty of the Spanish Bishops to come out openly and collectively against it. With Count Rodezno I discussed the attitude of the Carlists towards the restoration of Don Juan. It was clear to me from this talk, and from a subsequent discussion that Mr. Malley had with Don Joaquin Baleztena, that the great majority of Carlists were fully prepared to accept Don Juan but that they intended to judge him by his

acts and particularly by the type of adviser that he gathers around him.

Throughout these four hectic days I only saw one Falange uniform, that of the Civil Governor, and one Falange flag, in this case outside a young men's institute. According to my information there were in Pampeluna about a hundred Falangistas out of a population of 40,000. So weak indeed were the Falangistas that Franco had not dared to interfere with the local government of Navarre. Its *fueros* remained practically intact, the county council being still responsible for education, the hospitals and the local administration. Nowhere, indeed, in Spain was feeling against totalitarianism so bitter. Not only was totalitarianism regarded by these devout and resolute people as the work of the German antichrist, but it was also detested as the treacherous repudiation of all they fought for in the Civil War. It was the Navarrese who started the Movimiento several days before any one else moved a finger in Spain. Whatever may have been the motives in other provinces, their spirit was clear and uncontaminated. For them it was a movement for God, King and Country and their own historic liberties. Their bitterness, therefore, could be imagined when they saw an attempt made to destroy their ideals and to substitute for them the anti-Christian tyranny of the new order.

When I left Pampeluna, I came away with the conviction that the Navarrese were still prepared to die for their faith and that if at any time the war moved into the Peninsula we should find them at our side.

The end of my Navarrese chapter was a flight in the Air Attaché's Vega Gull from Pampeluna to Madrid, and a landing at Soria for want of petrol. The Spanish Air Ministry had failed to carry out their promise of a supply of aviation spirit at Pampeluna, and accordingly we landed at Soria imagining that upon its large aerodrome we should find the means of refuelling. As it turned out, we came down upon a desolate expanse of desert upon which no aeroplane had landed for three years. There, we found a man and his wife in a ruined cottage and no other signs of life except a pony which we hastily borrowed. The Assistant Air Attaché and the mechanic both mounted the pony, and rode off to Soria, eight kilometres away, fording the Douro en route. They were there informed that there was no aviation spirit in the neighbourhood. The mechanic, however, refusing to admit defeat, insisted upon making a personal search of the place, with

the result that he eventually discovered two drums of spirit that had been left there years ago by the Italians in the Civil War. Of this spirit we borrowed enough to take us to Madrid.

I quote this little incident as the tail piece of my visit to show the chaotic condition in the country where not even the Governor knew what supplies were available in his province.

I have described how we covered the north of Spain. We did not, however, neglect the south. If Catalonia, Navarre and Galicia were important for our purpose, so also was Andalusia with its capital of Seville. From time to time, therefore, we made journeys to the south, usually breaking them at Malaga, a city embittered and devastated by the Civil War, or Bailén, the scene of Napoleon's first great defeat, and subsequently proceeding to Seville, Jerez and Gibraltar.

From the rain and green enclosures of Galicia, and the mild climate and fruit trees of Catalonia it was a far cry to the wide expanses and torrid heat of Andalusia. No peoples could less resemble each other than the Catalans, the Basques and the Gallegos of the north, and the southerners of Andalusia and Murcia. The contrast between Seville and Barcelona typified the differences. The principal street of Seville, the Sierpes, is forbidden to wheeled traffic. Along its narrow sides crowds from the neighbourhood throng the cafés and watch the passers by. Outside, beggars and street sellers collect for themselves enough money to pay for their Sunday seat at the bull fight. Compare this narrow footway and its leisurely life with the Ramblas of Barcelona, humming with cars and trams, filled with a hurrying crowd of busy workers, a boulevard, half Paris and half Buenos Aires, and you will realise the gulf between Catalonia and Andalusia.

Only during Holy Week and the Feria, the holiday that follows Easter, does the spirit of the place seem to depart from Seville. The crowd of visitors, many of them foreigners, turn what should be the most typically Andalusian days of the year into a maelstrom of sight-seeing tourists. Having once seen the *pasos* of Holy Week we took care that our future visits to Seville should be at times when we could enjoy the city in its true beauty and meet our friends in a peaceful atmosphere of normal life.

The two outstanding personalities in the city were the Infante Don Carlos and the Cardinal Archbishop Segura. Don Carlos, now over eighty, was by birth a Bourbon Prince of Naples who had married the sister of Alfonso XVII., and become a Spanish

Infante. His second wife is a daughter of the Comte de Paris and a sister of the late Duc d'Orléans. Their daughter is Doña Mercedes, the wife of Don Juan. Both the Infantes are greatly beloved in Seville, he for his record of wise and tolerant administration when he was Captain General of Andalusia, and she for the alert mind and engaging manners that are the heritage of every Princess of the House of Orléans. There was general talk of his becoming regent if Franco disappeared. If he were twenty years younger, his well-deserved popularity would certainly entitle him to play an active part in any monarchist restoration.

The second outstanding personality was in marked contrast to the affable prince with the distinguished manners of generations of Bourbons.

The Archbishop, Cardinal Segura, comes of a modest family in the north. Short and thick-set in appearance, simple and quiet in manner, he gave me the impression of a countryman inured to the hard and exacting life of the fields. When I first met him, he reminded me of Cardinal Gasparri, the capable peasant from the Marches, who for so many years was the Papal Secretary of State.

Cardinal Segura had proved himself to be a strong man who in good and ill repute held unswervingly to his principles. As Primate of Spain he boldly resisted the republican attacks on the Church. He was banished, and for some time lived in Rome where he eventually resigned his Primatial See of Toledo. When the Republic fell, he returned to Spain as Archbishop of Seville. Falange *cæsarism* was, however, as abhorrent to him as republican intolerance. When the local Falangistas attempted to paint party slogans on his cathedral, he threatened them and the Civil Governor with excommunication.

Of all the opponents of Falangism I would consider him the most resolute. An ascetic who is impervious to worldly temptations, a Bishop whose pastoral work is a model to any diocese, a very human friend whose simple life endears him to his neighbours, he is all the more formidable as his opposition, being founded on unshakable principle is irreconcilable with a totalitarian régime. Of all my many contacts in the Spanish provinces there was none that I valued more than with this saintly and courageous Prince of the Church.

When I visited him at the period that I am describing, we sat in his small study discussing the German threat to Christian civilisation. He had just shown me a figure of Our Lady of Walsingham that he always had with him, when we heard a noise

from the other side of the door. The Cardinal got up and opened it. Across a small patio were two police agents watching us and listening to our conversation through an open window. When he had turned them out of the palace, we continued our interrupted talk. No incident could have thrown a more lurid light on the attitude of the Falange to the Church. Not even the palace of the Cardinal Archbishop was immune from their Gestapo methods.

I subsequently read a copy of the secret police report upon my visit to Seville. From start to finish it was a farrago of ignorance, invention and malevolence. The only excuse that I could find for it was that the army of underpaid agents had been ordered to make a report of this kind, and that if they had not obeyed, they would have lost their jobs.

But I must leave Seville to continue our journey further south. En route for Gibraltar we always stopped at Jerez not only to see the British vice-consul, Mr. Guy Williams, and his wife, but to visit also the headquarters of the wine trade of which his firm had for many years been a prominent member. Jerez with its bright sun and white houses was to us one of the most attractive towns in Spain. The juice of the grape seemed to have entered into its life. Its baroque churches and palaces bore evidence to its former riches, whilst the vast bodegas as high and bony as Gothic cathedrals showed that its potential source of wealth was unabated.

The father of the wine trade was the nonagenarian head of the Gonzalez family, the Marqués de Torre Soto. Like most of the Spanish families in the Jerez wine trade his had frequently made English and Scottish marriages. Some of the firms still bore their British names. This was as it should be in a trade that had been developed by a sergeant-major in one of Wellington's regiments and had since found its main outlet in the British market.

The Marqués de Torre Soto seemed to have found in the native grape an elixir *vitaæ perpetuaæ*. At the age of ninety, when we visited him, we sat down to dinner at 11 p.m. and left him hale and hearty at 2.30 a.m.. How enthralling are the very old! In some ways the Marqués reminded us of our old Italian friend, Count Greppi, who at the age of a hundred began the first volume of his *mémoires* under the title of *The First Hundred Years of My Life*.

Time had left neither wrinkles on their faces nor bitterness

in their hearts. Politics had never exhausted their energies nor robbed them of the due and proper time for life's amusements.

From Jerez to Gibraltar we passed through the *zona militar* that was causing so much anxiety in British circles. It was there that were installed the heavy guns that commanded the Straits. To the casual eye there seemed no extraordinary signs of military activity. Numbers of untidy troops roamed aimlessly about the neighbourhood. Military roads were certainly being driven through the hills, but there was no evidence of any exceptional haste in their construction. Barbed wire and military notices had undoubtedly spoilt some of the Peninsula's most beautiful views and closed the fine hunting country of the Calpe hounds. Nowhere, however, was there any evidence of an imminent attack upon the Rock. Each time that I visited Gibraltar I was confirmed in the view that the Spanish army was undoubtedly completing the defence plans that they had drawn up with German help during the Civil War in order to be in a position to intervene against us if Franco decided to join the Axis. But as there was no immediate intention of entering the war, the work was proceeding on the typical principle of the Spanish *Mañana*.

Our visits to Gibraltar were not only invaluable to me for the contact that they enabled me to maintain with the Allied operations in the Mediterranean, but for the tonic that they gave both of us after the disturbing atmosphere of Madrid.

As soon as we passed from the sordid town of La Linea into the territory of the Fortress and clanked across the defence ditches that had now turned the headland into an island, we found ourselves in a different world.

At the period of which I am writing many changes were taking place. Sir Clive Liddell had ended his term of office and given place to Lord Gort who was himself soon to be succeeded by General Mason MacFarlane.

To all three we owe a debt of gratitude. General Liddell found himself confronted with a fortress practically undefended for war. The Committee of Imperial Defence had held the opinion that the French alliance reduced to insignificance the danger of any attack upon the Rock. Air defence seemed impracticable in view of the lack of space for an aerodrome, and with the French naval bases at Casablanca and Bizerta at our disposal, the naval value of the harbour seemed to be greatly diminished. These arguments had been sometimes pushed to the extreme point of denying altogether the value of the base.

In any case the meagre defences of 1939 were totally inadequate when France collapsed and Italy entered the war against us. There then began a keen race against time. It fell to General Liddell to start it, and at the same time to transform the civil colony into a military fortress. Aided by General Mason MacFarlane he made an effective beginning. The civil population was evacuated, defence works were started on an extensive scale and the number of anti-aircraft guns substantially increased. Not the least of his services was the maintenance of good relations with his Spanish neighbours. With a tactless Governor the local troubles that were constantly occurring between the Rock and the mainland, might easily have led to serious consequences. General Liddell by settling most of them on the spot prevented their leading to crises in Madrid.

Lord Gort who became Governor in May, 1941, brought to the Rock the unique and up-to-date knowledge that he had gained in the General Staff and the command in France, and the boundless energy that had made him a byword in every post that he had ever held. The war atmosphere was immediately intensified. The Convent, to give Government House its correct name, took on the aspect of a Field Headquarters. The ascetic atmosphere of a religious community seemed after two centuries and a half to have returned to it. The Governor himself was the very embodiment of perpetual motion, now, climbing the Rock to inspect the anti-aircraft batteries and radio installations, now, inside the Rock supervising the ever-increasing plans for tunnels and subterranean barracks and stores, now, under the shadow of the Rock hurrying on the construction of a great aerodrome.

It is the aerodrome for which his term of office should be principally remembered. Without the facilities that it provided for the British and American forces in November, the African landing might never have succeeded. Lord Gort who at once grasped the vital importance of the aerodrome, was not to be deterred by the very formidable obstacles in the way of its construction. Hitherto, the only facilities for the Air Force had been a flying boat station and a small emergency landing ground on the racecourse for the machines of the Fleet Air Arm. To increase the landing ground it was necessary to absorb the racecourse, and with it, the garrison's only space for athletics, and as there was no room on land for further extension, to build it out into the bay. To add to these physical difficulties there were international complications over neutral territory and Spanish

territorial waters. Lord Gort pushed on undismayed by these obstacles, and forced into his service the by-product of his other principal activity, his tunnelling. The vast quantities of material that were dug out of the Rock to make room for the garrison and its services in the event of a siege were transferred to the embankment upon which the emergency landing ground was extended into the bay, and became an aerodrome capable of housing a thousand machines. Under his persistent pressure the tunnelling went on night and day. The explosions at night made visitors imagine that the Rock was being bombarded. The tunnellers themselves vied with each other in their work. A small Welsh miner told me with pride that he could excavate twice as much rock as Canadians twice his size. The Canadian colonel, known to everyone as Tommy the Tunneller, would not have accepted this claim, though he certainly would have admitted that there was little to choose between the miners in his command, all of whom, in this mining effort at least, were determined upon a maximum output.

In May, 1942, Lord Gort succeeded Sir William Dobbie as Governor of Malta. In his year of office he had transformed the fortress. The work begun by Sergeant Ince in the eighteenth century had developed into a network of barracks, hospitals and storehouses within the Rock and a great aerodrome nearly a thousand yards long extended from the only tongue of flat ground far out into the bay.

His successor was General Mason MacFarlane, who, having been twice second in command, now returned from a mission in Russia to be governor. Once again, the change brought new developments. The aerodrome was already on the way to completion. The barrack accommodation in the Rock had made notable progress. But just as Sir Clive Liddell had asked me to ensure him month after month of peace for his first chapter of the necessary work, and Lord Gort had as incessantly expanded the demand for time for the aerodrome, so General Mason MacFarlane insisted that he must have a further breathing space for improving the gun emplacements and providing in the Rock accommodation for the many subsidiary services that would be needed in a siege.

Time, time, time was the continuous demand of all three governors. That they were given two years and a half between the French armistice and the African invasion to make the fortress invulnerable to any attack but a long siege, and to turn

a practically useless emergency landing ground into a great aerodrome of strategic value, was a factor of primary importance in the military operations of November, 1942.

Our objective being identical—the gain of time for mobilising our strength—the relations between Gibraltar and the Madrid Embassy were both close and cordial. For the first two or three years we were principally dependent upon Gibraltar for food and stores. The conditions in Spain were so bad that it would have gone hardly with the Embassy and the British communities if we had not been able to supplement the inadequate and undependable Spanish rations by stores from Gibraltar. It was for this purpose that we organised a lorry service that was to prove invaluable for the relief and transport of escaped prisoners of war, and a system of couriers between Madrid and Gibraltar that became all the more necessary when we learnt of German plots to intercept our communications.

When I look back on these visits and particularly on my visits during the first half of 1942, I am astonished at the German and Italian failure to impede our military preparations. Secrecy was impossible in a fortress where 6000 Spaniards worked by day and returned to Spain every evening, where the aerodrome was only divided from Spain by an open railing, where the Bays of Gibraltar and Algeciras were filled with Axis spies, and on both the African and European coasts a chain of radio stations reported direct to Berlin the movements of Allied shipping. Whenever I arrived in Gibraltar, the news would be broadcast in Germany within a few minutes of my crossing the frontier out of Spain. When an Italian air attack was planned against the Rock, the Italian consul-general at Algeciras invited a large cocktail party in advance to see it. Yet, as I shall show later, this huge secret service and network of swift communications were proved to be practically useless so far as the supreme test, the African expedition, was concerned. Once again I had an example of what I had often marked in the war of 1914, the failure of a multiplicity of intelligence organisations. When secret agents fall over each other, and there are many separate services, the result is chaos so far as information is concerned and an internecine war between the various sections. So was it between the Germans and Italians. So was it also between one German organisation and another. The over-elaboration of espionage eventually ends in futility and confusion.

I have purposely described at length these visits to the north

and south. They were an essential part of my preparations for the autumn offensive. If I was to give the Government useful advice, it was necessary for me to be sure of my own ground. To return to the analogy of a parliamentary constituency with which I began this chapter, I had to make certain of the feeling of my own locality before I could advise upon the test of strength that was coming in the autumn.

I was due in London for consultation in the late summer. The first questions that I would be asked, would be about the Spanish attitude in the event of an African campaign. Will the Spaniards remain inactive if we take the war into African territory that always rouses their nationalist passions? Will they welcome or resist a German march to the Straits? Will the harbour and aerodrome of Gibraltar be available for the Allies? All through the summer, I could see these questions gathering strength and increasing in urgency.

When we left for England at the end of August, I could feel that although there was no clear and infallible answer to any of the great problems of the war, I had at least collected a valuable body of information that enabled me to offer an instructed reply that was on the whole favourable to the Allied plan of campaign.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WITH THE German advance in southern Russia and Stalingrad in urgent danger the outlook was darkened by heavy clouds. Our recent raid on Dieppe had been magnified by German propaganda into an overwhelming defeat of the British effort to start a second front. Spanish opinion was nervous and quickly excitable.

When I arrived in London I was at once plunged into innumerable meetings about the impending offensive. The questions that I had already foreseen, showered upon me. It was clear that Spain had become more rather than less important to the plan of campaign. The original idea that the African expedition could be based entirely on the Atlantic coast had been discarded. Further examination had shown that the strong tides and autumn storms made large-scale landings at Casablanca very precarious. Gibraltar, therefore, became the key to the operation, and the attitude of the Spanish Government a factor of paramount importance. The Allies by entering the Mediterranean and making their chief naval and air base in the Straits were taking very grave risks, unless Spanish inaction could be assured. The alarmists were saying that if we chose Gibraltar as our main air and naval base we were putting our heads into a guillotine, and that once in the Straits or through the Straits the heavy guns in the Tarifa hills could put the harbour out of action in a few hours and the aerodrome in as many minutes. These dangers very definitely existed. It was futile and dangerous to ignore them.

It was arranged that I should be given the full details of the plan, then known as "Torch," and that I should discuss the likely Spanish reactions with the ministers and officials chiefly engaged upon it. We thought it wisest, however, that I should have no personal contact with General Eisenhower. If it had become known that he and the British Ambassador in Madrid were meeting, a clue would at once have been given to the Allied intentions. Accordingly, I dealt with the British liaison official who was attached to him.

The advice that I gave and set out in several memoranda was as follows. The attitude of the Spanish Government would depend on the actual course of events. If the initial landings went

swiftly and satisfactorily, German pressure and germanophil influence in the Spanish Government would be powerless to push Franco into hostile action. If, however, there was any appearance of initial failure or of delay in the deployment of the expeditionary force, the Spanish Government would probably succumb to the temptation of striking a decisive blow against us, particularly if it seemed likely that the Germans might forestall them in attacking Gibraltar. I insisted that as this seemed to me to be the position, it was essential for us to win a quick success, and at the same time to re-ensure at least a portion of the Gibraltar risk by a simultaneous use of Casablanca. An essential part of the plan should be the immediate seizure of landing grounds within range of the south of Spain. The power of retaliation against any hostile act on the part of the Spanish Government would be a formidable deterrent to Franco and Serrano Suñer. If we could survive the first few days without a serious check and with an appearance of definite success, I was fairly confident that the Spanish Government would not embarrass us. It was, however, necessary at the very beginning of the operations to reassure Franco as to our intentions. I must, therefore, be authorised formally to state that the invasion in no way threatened Spanish interests in Africa or altered our undertakings to respect the territorial integrity of Spain. It was also necessary to continue regularly our economic programme of two-way trade and to lose no opportunity of showing that Spain depended on us rather than Germany for essential supplies. Finally, it was important to avoid any incidents, for instance, the unnecessarily long stoppage of Spanish ships at Gibraltar, that might strike the smouldering embers of Spanish nationalism into flame.

As I found general agreement on these lines, I was able to devote much of my time to certain of the details that particularly concerned Spain. The most urgent of them for me was the problem of camouflage.

How was it possible to disguise our intentions and to mislead the enemy? There was Gibraltar overlooked by an army of spies on the mainland and open every day to thousands of Spanish workers. There was Tangier, a few miles off on the African coast, now one of the chief secret service centres of the Axis. There, also, were the Straits lined with radio and infra-red stations fully reporting the movement of every Allied ship and aeroplane. An expedition of the size of "Torch" would mean hundreds of ships in the Bay of Gibraltar and the neighbouring waters, and

thousands of machines on the aerodrome. The crisis, therefore, would begin whilst the expedition was assembling, days and perhaps weeks before the actual date of the landing. The Germans would demand from the Spanish Government an explanation of what was happening. How was it, they would certainly ask, that the neutral ground between Spanish and British territory was being used for the gathering of a great air force? How was it that Allied ships were being collected for some obviously military purpose not only in the harbour of Gibraltar but, also in the Spanish waters of the Bay of Algeciras?

Embarrassing questions such as these were sure to be pressed by Serrano Suñer. It was essential that we should be ready for them when he forced them upon us. To find satisfactory and convincing answers without disclosing or compromising our plans was obviously impossible. We could, however, forestall and counter some at least of the danger by a subtle and intensive propaganda. For this purpose a special department was set to work in Whitehall for the diffusion of misleading information and rumours about our intentions. The most cunning devices were to be used; a constant flood of tendentious evidence was to be directed on certain agreed objectives, and the general impression created that the projected offensive was against Italy and the eastern Mediterranean and not Africa. To Spaniards an Allied offensive in Italy had much in its favour. It would mean the diversion of the military operations to the central Mediterranean and remove the risk of North Africa, the focus of so many Spanish interests and anxieties, becoming the main centre of the war.

How this part of the plan worked, I will describe later. At this moment, however, it is necessary to turn aside to a very important event that happened in Madrid whilst I was actually engaged in London upon these urgent conversations.

On September 3rd Count Jordana replaced Serrano Suñer as Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Minister who had led the pro-German forces in Spain and who of all others was most certain to seize the opportunity of doing us grave injury at this critical moment, had disappeared; and his place had been taken by the very man whom in the Burgos days he had driven from office on account of his opposition to the Axis.

Providence had certainly intervened in our favour.

How, then, had this change come about? Franco had recently shown no weakening in his conviction that the Allies could

never win; the Blue Division was being daily acclaimed as the Spanish contribution to the victorious crusade; the brothers-in-law, although the one was obviously suspicious of the other, seemed to have formed a joint stock company that only a general liquidation of the régime would be able to dissolve.

"Once again, however, the course of events had followed the beaten track. Just as in the autumn of 1940 Franco had cunningly delayed the dismissal of Beigbeder until the Minister's indiscretions delivered him into his hands, so now, an opportunity had at last come after six months of waiting to rid himself of a brother-in-law who was clearly trying to become his rival. As almost always in Spanish affairs the actual moment came unexpectedly.

"August 15th is a day of solemn observance at Begoña near Bilbao. Thither go thousands of Requetés to take part in an annual requiem for the souls of their comrades killed in the Civil War. Amongst them in 1942 was General Varela, the War Minister, the husband of a Basque wife, and the leader in the cabinet of the anti-Suñer forces. As he was leaving the church, bombs were thrown into the crowd, and although he himself escaped, more than seventy people around him were injured.

"The Government tried at first to conceal the gravity of the outrage. Inquiry, however, proved that the attack had been organised in Valladolid by leading Falangistas, one of whom at least, Domínguez Muños, was a notorious criminal who had recently been employed in the German sabotage organisation at Algeciras, and another, José Luna, a party leader of very evil reputation. Although it was not seriously suggested that Serrano Suñer was directly implicated in the outrage, the fact was inescapable that he was at the time the acting chief of the Party and that the criminals were his Party henchmen and intimate associates.

"It afterwards transpired that the outrage was the result of a cunning and unscrupulous intrigue within the Falange itself. Serrano Suñer's two colleagues in the Ministry, Arrese and Giron, were determined to embroil him with Franco. It was they who were the promoters of the outrage and who subsequently trapped Serrano Suñer into the compromising position of defending Domínguez Muños and attacking Franco when he refused to commute the death sentence pronounced on him by a court martial. Every detail of the incident in fact added to the scandal.

"A very dangerous situation was immediately created between the army and the Party. To avoid a crisis, Franco acted true to

type. He simultaneously dismissed Serrano Suñer to satisfy the army, and General Varela to draw the teeth of the Falange.

An interesting sidelight was thrown on these ministerial changes by the information that we received of Von Stohrer's attempt to prevent Serrano Suñer's dismissal. The Ambassador was at Biarritz when he heard the news. As his own car was in dock, he took a German military car, and hurried off to Madrid. But the military car had no papers, and he was held up at the frontier with the result that he did not arrive in Madrid until thirty-six hours after the event. It was then too late for an effective protest. It was also too late for Von Stohrer himself. He was never forgiven by Ribbentrop for this double lapse of knowledge and energy. His days were numbered, and it was no surprise when soon afterwards he was recalled from Madrid.

What mattered more to us than Von Stohrer's disgrace was Serrano Suñer's departure. It was of lesser interest that Franco balanced Jordana's appointment by strengthening the Falange hold over domestic affairs. In September, 1942, a few weeks before the African landing, it was in the Department of Foreign Affairs that we needed a cautious and sympathetic minister. As events were to prove, Jordana's steady influence in November was to be a cardinal factor in the Spanish attitude.

I was glad to be in England when Serrano Suñer's dismissal was announced. If I had been in Madrid, gossip would have invented many stories about my vendetta against him and my part in the final act. The blow was struck by Franco and Franco alone. With the British Ambassador in England there could be no question of his complicity.

When I heard the news, I felt that a strange chapter of my life had ended. For two years the Minister and I had been at almost open war with each other. The details of this long drawn out conflict I recounted in a letter that I sent to London as soon as I returned to Spain. I do not apologise for its length. The fall of the first of the totalitarian Foreign Ministers was at any time an event of great political interest; on the eve of the African invasion it was an event of strategic importance.

15th October, 1942.

"The fall of Serrano Suñer, whatever we may prudently say of it in public, is an event that has reverberated far outside the internal confines of Spain. His was the motive force that pushed the Falange into the control of Spanish life, his the undivided

faith in German victory that dominated General Franco's Government, and his, again, the overwhelming hatred of the Anglo-Saxon world that constantly embittered our relations with Spain during the last two years.

"Nor is it a matter of insignificant account that he is the first to fall of the flashy trinity of totalitarian foreign ministers. Between him, Ribbentrop and Ciano there was much in common. Vanity, and perfidy, ostentation and jealousy, cynicism and snobbery made them the three musketeers of totalitarian intrigue. Lastly, Serrano Suñer's departure marks the break-up of a partnership that in spite of temporary disagreements, has been unlimited between him and his brother-in-law since the start of the 'Movimiento.'

"Do all or any of these consequences foretell a definite change in the direction of Spanish policy? To-day, it is too soon to attempt an answer to the question. All that I can at present hazard, is that, for the time being, his successor, suspected as he is by the bewildered Germans, will walk very warily and avoid at all costs the charge of hostility against the Axis. Particularly must we expect from him an attitude of prudence at a time when the immediate course of the war is still obscure.

"Whatever may be the result of the change, it is worth our while to look back over the period of Serrano Suñer's regime and to attempt an assessment both of his personal character and his political record.

"If I wrote a psychological study of his personal character, I should find my model in the novels of Stendhal. For Stendhal possesses an unrivalled talent for analysing the sensibilities, intricacies and perversions of human nature. The love of power, the struggle to achieve it, the determination to maintain it, and the delight in displaying it, he describes in particular with a penetrating cynicism that almost always ignores the higher motives of the human mind and heart. In Serrano Suñer, Stendhal would have found a personality that fully conformed with his conception of the ambitious careerist whom he so often made the central figure of his novels. Count Mosca in the *Chartreuse de Parme* was Serrano Suñer's prototype.

"Those who knew Serrano Suñer intimately—I am thinking in particular of the Portuguese and Brazilian Ambassadors in Madrid—tell me that he possessed great personal charm. I had no experience of this side of his nature. To Lady Maud and myself he was consistently rude. Fortunately, perhaps, we never

upon a single occasion received an invitation to his house. His friends also tell me that he was devoted to his numerous family. It is certainly true that he worshipped his eldest son to the point of having him painted in a white Austrian uniform and the Order of St. Stephen, in exact imitation, in fact, of the well-known portrait of l'Aiglon.

"Looking myself at this strange man, nervous, sensitive with the sensibility of a jealous woman, prematurely grey, meticulously careful of his personal appearance, I once thought that he was something of a pinchbeck Robespierre. For behind his pleasant family life and his obvious delight in smart society, he had a ruthless nature. More than once he spoke to me of shooting men and women, as if it were a matter of no account, and never did he display the least symptom of human kindness towards the protestations that I constantly made to him about the iniquitous treatment of innocent people. It was clear to me from the start of my dealings with him that he detested me, not only because I represented an Anglo-Saxon Government, but also because I had been an intimate friend of Beigbeder, his rival and predecessor.

"This personal hatred of Beigbeder had a considerable effect upon all his subsequent behaviour. His predecessor had been the champion, perhaps the sole champion in the Spanish Government, of a policy of caution at the time of the French collapse. Serrano Suñer, impulsive to the point of irresponsible rashness, wished to move even quicker than Mussolini. He was convinced that the corpse of the British Empire lay ready for dissection. He could not, therefore, endure Beigbeder's assertions that 'the bull was not yet dead.'

"At the time of my arrival in Spain, Serrano Suñer was already determined to destroy his personal rival, and in the meanwhile to sterilise all the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By a mixture of threat and intrigue, backed by the iron fist of German support, he succeeded in his design. Beigbeder was thrown into the street. It is interesting to note that by an application of poetic justice, his own departure was not very different from that of his rival. In neither case does Franco seem to have given any personal explanation of the dismissal, nor indeed to have allowed the victims an interview before they heard their fate.

"When Serrano Suñer took possession of the Foreign Office, he was set upon a complete reversal of his predecessor's policy. Beigbeder had been well disposed to ourselves and the United States. This fact was sufficient for Serrano Suñer to lose no opportunity

for showing us that he loathed us. Beigbeder believed that the resources of the British Empire, supported by the inevitable entry of the United States into the war, would eventually prevent a German victory, and might indeed achieve a German defeat. He was, therefore, anxious to maintain friendly relations with us against the day of a possible new Peninsular war. Serrano Suñer on the other hand did not disguise his absolute conviction that Ribbentrop, Ciano and he would be in London on September 15th, 1940, for what in Madrid was generally described as Hitler's victory cocktail.

"Beigbeder, in his unshaken determination to keep Spain out of the war, saw in the solidarity of the Peninsula a bulwark against German aggression. His chief ambition, therefore, was to complete an accord with Portugal, that would bring to bear upon Spain the undoubted influence of Dr. Salazar in support of Peninsular neutrality. It will be remembered how fierce was the battle between Beigbeder and Serrano Suñer over the negotiation and the signature of the agreement that was eventually concluded. It seemed as if at the very last minute Serrano Suñer would prevent Franco's final approval. It is not, therefore, surprising that one of the first evidences of Serrano Suñer's appointment was a violent campaign in the Falange party and press against Portuguese friendship, and an inspired clamour for the re-absorption of Portugal in the Spanish Empire.

"In two other respects Serrano Suñer came pledged to destroy his predecessor's handiwork. To Beigbeder, Hispanidad had meant Spanish influence founded upon the only two forces upon which Spaniards are agreed, a common faith and a common language. Using these subtle influences with tact and sympathy he was, at the time of his fall, steadily improving the relations between Metropolitan Spain and Spanish America. In a moment, Serrano Suñer brushed away this network of cultural unity, and attempted to put in its place a crude totalitarianism that outraged the sentiments of almost every South American state.

"Lastly, there was the question, a very important question, of Spanish relations with the Vatican. When Cardinal Gomá, the Primate of Spain, died during the Beigbeder régime, it seemed likely that the main causes of dispute between Rome and Madrid would be amicably removed. Serrano Suñer's arrival meant, on the contrary, a campaign of threat and bluster from the Spanish side that has for more than two years left unfilled half the Sees of the Church in Spain. Moreover, as Serrano Suñer

always delighted in adding personal insult to political disagreement, he went out of his way during his first visit to Rome to affront the Pope by failing to visit the Vatican.

"I quote these illustrations not only to emphasise the complete reversal of policy for which Serrano Suñer was responsible, but also to throw light on certain aspects of his personal character. Personalities, carried often to the point of savage feuds, loom very large in Spanish politics. New ministers have the habit of changing the personnel of their departments, and reversing the policy of their predecessors. It may be said, therefore, that the revolution brought about by Serrano Suñer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was true to Spanish type. Whilst this comment may be just to a certain point, it does not take account of the personal venom and overwhelming egoism that Serrano Suñer instilled into his changes. Determined to obliterate everyone and everything except himself, he never lost an opportunity of making it clear to the Spanish world that only he counted in the new Spain. Never did he give a thought to the comfort or convenience of the staff in his department. When he was not insulting them, he made the work of the office impossible by a mixture of absenteeism and bad temper. For days on end he would keep them ignorant of his movements. In the midst of a crisis he would vanish to some distant corner of Spain for some *chasse*, with the smart world of Madrid. If it was any consolation to his secretaries, he was equally discourteous to the *corps diplomatique*, making ambassadors wait interminably in his ante-room, cancelling appointments and failing to fulfil engagements without a word of apology or explanation. Upon the only occasion that I asked him to dinner, he first accepted, and then demanded a list of the guests. When, with great reluctance, I sent him the names, he refused to come on the ground that he personally disliked one of the guests, although the guest in question was the accredited Minister of a friendly foreign government. For the former American Ambassador, Mr. Weddell, he reserved his most vindictive rancour, with the result that at the risk of embroiling Spanish relations with the United States and of starving Spain, he succeeded in making his position unbearable.

"His colleagues in the Government, I believe without a single exception, he either disliked or despised. If one of them was so fortunate as to obtain some publicity in the press, he saw to it that he himself filled the front pages of the papers for many days to come.

"Perhaps most conspicuously of all, his egoism showed itself in the abandonment of his friends. In his eyes they were nothing more than instruments for his own glorification. The favourite of one day quickly became the outcast of the next. Spain is full of the men whom he first raised to high posts and then threw into the gutter. It is not, therefore, surprising that he is left to-day with no party and no personal friends upon whose help he can rely. Never did a public man enjoy a better opportunity for consolidating a great position. His hold on his brother-in-law, backed as it was by the close alliance of the two wives, his leadership of the Falange, the only organised Party in Spain, his command of unlimited funds, and not least, his restless activity that compared so favourably with the inactivity of most of his colleagues, might well have enabled him to create a position that in the present circumstances of Spain would have proved unassailable. His ferocious selfishness combined with a staggering ignorance of other countries completely destroyed this great opportunity.

"To-day, therefore, he can point to no achievement in the field of foreign affairs, and to no company of friends upon whom he can count for his future rehabilitation. .

"I would guess, however, that such being his blind egoism, he is even now comforting himself with the belief that it is his efforts, and his alone, that have kept Spain out of the war. If this is the case, my comment is that for the first half of his period of office he did everything in his power to provoke a rupture between Spain and Great Britain, and that if, during the last few months, he began to trim his sails, it was due to the wind that was blowing inside and outside his country against Germany, rather than to any spontaneous change of his prejudiced mind."

These were hard words. They were justified. And because they were justified they showed the extent of our good fortune in being rid of this dangerous man on the eve of the African expedition.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

WHEN I returned to Madrid at the beginning of October I had about a month for the final preparations for zero day.

It was a time of constant anxiety. There were two points at which serious trouble might flare up. First, in the weeks before the operation started when the assembling of great naval and air forces was taking place at Gibraltar, and we were still without the prestige of an initial success. Next, immediately after the landings, if there seemed to be any fumbling or failure about the progress of the attack.

General Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the United States army, has vividly described these anxieties in his "Biennial report on the war between June, 1941, and 1943." The convoys, with 107,000 troops on board, were to start on Oct. 24th and Oct. 25th and in the meanwhile thousands of aircraft were to use the Gibraltar aerodrome as a staging and assembly point. "The combined air forces other than carrier-borne and a few transports and heavy bombers," to quote a sentence from the report, "had to be funnelled through the single restricted field at Gibraltar which could have been put out of action in less than half an hour. There was no choice but to accept this hazard."

On the Spanish side more than one influential general was eagerly looking forward to an African campaign in which Spaniards could satisfy their chauvinist ambitions, and the Spanish army win the rewards and trophies of an easy victory. The Falange was daily becoming more aggressive in its attempt to eliminate any symptoms of anglophilism in the country. Franco had recently proclaimed himself the residuary legatee of Queen Isabella the First, who, in what was claimed to be her last will and testament had bequeathed Gibraltar and Africa to Spain.

These were disturbing signs. A minor cause of worry was the practical difficulty of carrying on our intricate counter-propaganda when only the most senior members of my staff knew of "Torch" and were consequently authorised to deal with the pile of confidential telegrams on the subject that needed to be ciphered and deciphered.

To create a favourable background for our propaganda, I

used to the full my recent experiences in London for insisting upon the invincibility of the Anglo-American forces and resources, and the sanctity of our pledges to respect the integrity of Spanish territory.

It was especially necessary to repeat the assurances as to our attitude to Spain. The Germans were flooding the country with stories that the Allied forces were gathering for an attack on the Peninsula, and that if the invasion succeeded, a communist government under Dr. Negrin, who, as they asserted, had recently lunched with Mr. Churchill in Downing Street, and been received by the King at Buckingham Palace, was to be installed in Madrid. The moral to be drawn by Spaniards was the need of a German army in Spain to prevent the catastrophe. Even responsible diplomats fell victims to this war of nerves. Two neutral but friendly ministers definitely informed me that Hitler had decided to enter Spain in a fortnight's time. Whilst I could inwardly smile at this credulity, I could not forget the fact that as Spain was in an altogether abnormal condition after the Civil War, a war of nerves might easily lead to some foolish or dangerous action on the part of the Spanish Government.

My rôle was, however, clear. I must carry imperturbability to the point of outward complacency. This was the part that I played continuously until November 8th, the zero day for "Torch." I made two speeches, one to the Embassy staff and another to the Allied diplomatic corps in which I scouted the very possibility of an Allied setback or of a repudiation of our promises to Spain. I went out of my way to say on both occasions that nothing that I said was confidential. My words had all the greater circulation and effect from the fact that they were not published in the Spanish press.

I took the same line with Franco in a long interview that I had with him on October 19th after my return from London. I repeated it constantly in my many discussions with the new Minister for Foreign Affairs. To Franco in particular I emphasised on October 19th the economic argument that Spain was dependent on Anglo-Saxon resources. I added that we were at that very moment considering a programme of imports covering Spanish needs, for instance, oil, wheat, rubber and cotton. If the programme was to proceed, it was essential for the Spanish Government to avoid serious incidents with us and to remove any existing causes of friction.

With the African expedition in my mind I repeated my

complaints on the subject of Axis activities in the Straits. In spite of many promises to stop German and Italian espionage, night observation, radio transmission stations, and sabotage, organisations were continuing to operate with the undeniable connivance of the local Spanish authorities. These activities, I insisted, must be stopped, if our economic plans were to produce results. Franco, who had listened with attention, replied that he was glad to hear once again our assurances as to Spanish interests and territory, and that as to my specific complaints he would do his best to stop unneutral activities, but that Spain was in a difficult position and unfortunate incidents might sometimes take place "as a result of inadvertence or corruption." This "inadvertence or corruption" did not seem to strike him as particularly reprehensible. For he added the curious comment that the only difference between German and Allied activities in Spain was that whilst the Germans bribed Spanish officials we intrigued with Spanish Reds.

As to the blockade, he was equally remote from realities. What, he asked, was the good of irritating Spain with navicerts and quotas when the blockade had ceased to operate? The Germans had more than enough of everything that they needed. What better evidence could there be of this fact than the 8000 tons of wheat that they had recently sent to Spain? He entirely ignored the history of this insignificant consignment of German wheat. It was compensation for the sinking of a Spanish wheat ship by a German submarine. He ignored also the fact that Spain needed an annual import of about a million tons of wheat, and that the 8000 tons were nothing more than a valueless piece of German propaganda. Nor would he admit that the invincible German machine lacked anything for its continued operation.

These typical and irritating answers left me in doubt as to the effect of my representations. The chief of the Protocol, however, who was present at this interview, thought that my words had not been wasted. More concrete evidence, however, came from our secret sources of German information. These reports showed that the German activities in the Straits were at last becoming more difficult, and the Spanish authorities less amenable to German pressure. Perhaps it was these growing troubles that a fortnight later made the German Ambassador say at a dinner-party in Madrid: "The British Embassy pack is always on the prowl, behaving undiplomatically and doing unexpected things, but we must admit it is being very well hunted."

With the new Minister for Foreign Affairs I soon achieved friendly and intimate relations. I saw him frequently during these weeks not only in the Ministry but also in the Embassy and in his official residence. As our friendship became closer, I became more than ever convinced that he would be on our side when the African offensive opened. The contrast between Jordana and Serrano Suñer could not have been more conspicuous. In appearance, the new minister was small to the point of insignificance. When he sat in his chair, his feet did not touch the ground. Diffident in manner, hesitating in speech, he was poles apart from Serrano Suñer's *espagnolisme*. In spite, however, of these unimpressive characteristics he inspired me from the start with confidence. He was obviously a patriotic Spaniard who with an unquestioned singleness of purpose desired to serve his country's true interests. In every post that he had held he had left a reputation for honesty and common sense. Treading in his father's footsteps he had been a successful High Commissioner in the Spanish zone of Morocco. Subsequently he had been Franco's first Foreign Minister in Burgos and had been dismissed from office for his opposition to the Axis. More recently, he had held a sinecure post as President of the *Consejo de Estado*, where he had been allowed no influence in public affairs. By a coincidence not uncommon in Spanish ministerial history, he had succeeded Serrano Suñer, the man whose hatred had led to his fall in the days of Burgos, just as Serrano Suñer himself had taken the place of his arch enemy Beigbeder.

My contacts with the new Minister reassured me. They were, however, moments of extreme anxiety. The worst was immediately after my return to Madrid, when my excellent military and naval attachés gave me some very disturbing news. The body had been washed ashore near Cadiz of a naval officer who was carrying from General Clark to the Governor of Gibraltar the final details of the "Torch" landings. Further inquiries confirmed the identity of the courier and also the fact that the body was in the hands of the Spanish naval authorities. All that was possible was to ask for it to be handed over to us and to hope that the secret papers had not been discovered. The Ministry of Marine, always better disposed to us than the Ministry of War, agreed to our request, and when the dead officer's effects were examined there was no evidence of any tampering with the papers. None the less, the doubt remained as to whether they had not been read and re-sealed, a doubt that persisted until "Torch" actually

started. In the meanwhile, the ingenious minds in London were more than ever active in laying false trails, one of which in particular, took the enemy hounds galloping off to Italy and the Near East.

It was obvious that Jordana was making every effort to keep Spain clear of any entanglements. Whilst the ships and aeroplanes were gathering in Gibraltar, he steadily looked the other way and refrained from embarrassing me with any awkward questions. It was not until a few hours before the actual operation that he showed some nervousness about Moorish unrest and asked me for assurances that we would not excite it. He seemed quite satisfied with my reply that we had no intention of stirring up internal trouble in Morocco, and did not press me further as to our military intentions.

What, I frequently asked myself, would have happened in these weeks if Serrano Suñer had still been in office? Should we not have had a series of crises over the aerodrome and the Bay of Gibraltar that would have concentrated a spotlight upon the base at the very time that we wished to keep it in obscurity? How often I blessed my good fortune that I was dealing with a wise friend and not an excitable enemy!

Our plan of campaign had been meticulously worked out. As soon as the American Ambassador and I received the news that the operation had started, he was to assure Franco, and I Jordana, that there was no threat to Spain or Spanish interests and that our two governments were in full sympathy with the desire of the Spanish Government to save the Peninsula from the evils of war.

The difficult question was how to carry our instructions into effect without exciting Spanish suspicions or giving the impression that we were anxious as to the success of the expedition. November 8th was a Sunday when Franco would be shooting rabbits and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs closed. If we made an almost unprecedented request for two Sunday interviews several days in advance, it would be immediately assumed that November 8th was fixed as the date of a great military event. As, however, we had to make sure that Franco and Jordana would be within reach to receive our communications we decided to wait until the last possible moment and finally to ask Jordana in as discreet a manner as possible whether, if we had to see him on an urgent matter, he would be available on the Sunday morning. Having made sure that he would be in Madrid, we waited through November

7th for the telegrams that were to confirm the start of the operation.

It was essential for me in face of the flood of rumours that were circulating in Madrid to maintain an attitude of unconcern until the moment that "Torch" actually started. I purposely, therefore, spent the afternoon shooting wood pigeons with Count Velayos, the eldest son of the venerable Count Romanones.

It was a perfect autumn afternoon. As I waited under an ilex tree for the pigeons and looked out on the Velasquez landscape, I had several hours to think of the convoys that were already on their way and the Spanish reaction that the operation would excite. When I finally received the telegram that the expedition had begun to land, I was for the same reason careful not to ask for a melodramatic interview in the middle of the night. I accordingly arranged to see Jordana at 11 a.m. on Sunday morning. My American colleague, who had seen him earlier, was able to inform me that the Minister had taken the news quietly and had said nothing that implied the likelihood of dangerous developments. The Minister had also arranged that the Ambassador should have an immediate meeting with the Caudillo. The ground was therefore favourable when I made my visit. Having stated that the expedition, although under an American commander-in-chief and to a large extent composed of American units, was an Anglo-American operation, and a strategic part of the campaign that had started so successfully at Alamein, I read him a Spanish translation of the following note:

"The Spanish Government will already have received from the United States Government a statement regarding operations upon which the United Nations are now embarking in French North Africa. These operations are being carried out primarily by American forces, and, under American command, substantial British forces are taking part. His Majesty's Government realise the close interest taken by the Spanish Government and people in North Africa and for this reason they wish to convey to the Spanish Government a solemn assurance that the operations with which the British forces are now associated in no way threaten Spanish territory, metropolitan or overseas. Spanish territory will be fully respected by the British naval, military and air forces engaged, and Spanish interests in North Africa will not be compromised. The action now being taken by the United Nations renders

speed unavoidable since they cannot allow French African territory to be used by the Axis forces as a base for hostile operations against them. They have been unavoidably compelled to forestall the Axis plans.

"2. His Majesty's Government also desire to assure the Spanish Government that these operations will not compromise the existing *modus vivendi* in Tangier or the Trade Agreement and exchanges of goods between Spain and British territories. Nor, so far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, should they interfere in any way with the present exchanges of goods between Spain and the outside world for which British Navy Certificates (navicerts) have been and are being granted. Furthermore, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, these trade agreements should be facilitated by the present operations since the freeing of the North African coast from the danger of Axis control should lessen the danger from Axis submarines to Allied and neutral shipping including that of Spain. Nor should these operations compromise internal trade between the two zones.

"3. In these circumstances the Spanish Government need have no fears regarding the course or the result of these operations which are solely directed to removing any Axis threat to French North African territory.

"4. His Majesty's Government are in full sympathy with what they understand to be the desire of the Spanish Government to save the Iberian Peninsula from the evils of war. Briefly, they wish Spain to have every opportunity to recover from the devastation of the Civil War and to take her due place in the reconstruction of the Europe of the future."

This statement evidently reassured the Minister. Whilst he himself did not seem unduly worried at the idea of a great campaign in North Africa, he added a word of caution to the effect that the Council of Ministers would be immediately called to consider the whole situation.

While I was with him, my American colleague was at the Prado transmitting to Franco the following letter from the President:

"DEAR GENERALISSIMO FRANCO,

"It is because your nation and mine are friends in the best sense of the word and because you and I are sincerely desirous

of the continuance of that friendship for our mutual good that I want very simply to tell you of the compelling reasons that have forced me to send some powerful American military force to the assistance of the French possessions in North Africa.

"We have accurate information to the effect that Germany and Italy intend at an early date to occupy with military force French North Africa.

"With your wide military experience you will understand clearly that in the interests of the defence of both North America and South America it is essential that action be taken to prevent an Axis occupation of French Africa without delay.

"To provide for America's defence I am sending a powerful army to French possessions and protectorates in North Africa with the sole purpose of preventing occupation by Germany and Italy and with the hope that these areas will not be devastated by the horror of war.

"I hope you will accept my full assurances that these moves are in no shape, manner or form directed against the Government or people of Spain or Spanish Morocco, Rio de Oro or Spanish islands. I believe the Spanish Government and the Spanish people wish to maintain neutrality and to remain outside the war. Spain has nothing to fear from the United Nations.

"I am, my dear General, your sincere friend,
(*Sgd.*) FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT."

Franco seemed to have read the letter with composure, and to have shown no signs of perturbation or excitement.

The Council of Ministers was subsequently summoned, but significantly, for an hour that enabled the Caudillo to have his day's shooting after the meeting. This also seemed to me a good sign.

Whilst the immediate reception of the news by Franco and Jordana could not have been better, and it had consequently proved unnecessary for me to see Franco, less satisfactory symptoms showed themselves in the Council of Ministers. The Minister of War, who had already warned our military attaché of the special interests of Spain in Africa and the two chief Falange Ministers, who were completely under German influence, were known to be in favour of Spanish intervention. It appeared to them that a unique chance had arrived for aligning Falange

Spain militarily with Nazi Germany, and striking a decisive blow against the Anglo-Saxon democracies. As the army and the Falange represented the two most powerful forces in the country, their alliance in the Council of Ministers on the side of intervention carried a threat that could not be ignored. Fortunately, Jordana stood firm and a ministerial decision was adjourned until the next meeting.

It was this postponement that finally turned the scales in our favour. "Torch" blazed away from the start. The first forty-eight hours produced one success after another. The plans worked with clockwork precision. The result was a general feeling of *fait accompli* and Allied victory achieved.

When the Council of Ministers resumed the discussion, it was clear that events had moved too strongly and swiftly in our favour for any chance of successfully attacking us or holding us to ransom in the Straits. The interventionists had lost their case. Our immediate occupation of tactical landing grounds had given us an effective means of retaliation if either Germans or Spaniards tried to cut our communications, and the deployment of our striking force, coupled with Rommel's defeats, would henceforth keep Hitler so fully occupied as to make a movement through Spain almost impossible.

An incident that had a personal interest for me during these days was the arrival of General Giraud in Africa. I had been expecting him in Spain for some time. So also had the Gestapo. One evening towards the end of the summer I had received a confidential message that he had arrived in Madrid, and was leaving by the night train for Lisbon. He was to be arrested by the Spanish police, but in order to avoid an incident in Madrid, not until he reached the Spanish frontier. My staff and I at once decided to remove him from the train before he fell into the hands of the Gestapo. We therefore arranged to intercept him at a wayside station after he had boarded the train and to bring him back into safe keeping. Unfortunately, as it seemed to us at the time, the Gestapo changed their plans and the arrest was made in the Madrid station. The tall man with long, drooping moustaches was taken off to the *Seguridad* where he was left *incommunicado*. In the meanwhile the Swiss authorities in Madrid were inquiring about a well-known Swiss man of business who was passing through Madrid en route for trade negotiations and who had mysteriously vanished. The description of the lost banker as a tall man with long moustaches eventually

penetrated to the Seguridad. The result was the discovery that the supposed General Giraud was the harmless Swiss engaged upon innocent business. The incident ended in general ridicule of the police for a flagrant case of mistaken identity, but also in the uneasy feeling that Gestapo did what they liked on Spanish territory. The real General Giraud was eventually put ashore on the African coast by an Allied submarine.

I must not, however, be deflected from the main course of events.

When I had safely survived the first few days of the invasion, and the military operations were well under weigh, I had time to take stock of the position.

I had been lucky enough to be involved in what I believed to be the decisive plan of the war. The plan had succeeded, and it was of particular interest and value to look back and study the methods by which success had been achieved. I had no wish to arrogate to myself or my staff credit that was due to many others. At the same time we had played our part in keeping the flank quiet whilst the military operation was starting. We seemed to have been successful, and it was certain that there were lessons to be learnt from what had happened.

The outstanding lesson was the need for strategy and diplomacy to keep in step. If we had not carefully prepared the ground over many months, we might well have had a sudden explosion in Spain. We had, however, built up an invaluable body of goodwill in the country by our economic programme and our personal relations with Spaniards in all walks of life. We had constantly attempted to keep the atmosphere quiet and to make it clear, not by ultimatum but by reasonable argument, that Spain had more to gain from the Allies than from the Axis. Two years' work on these lines, often uphill and troublesome work, had made it far more difficult for the germanophiles to plunge the country into war against us. Franco, with his ear always to the ground, could not avoid hearing the rumbling of discontent against any suggestion of an aggressive policy. The result was that when the opportunity came to do us serious harm in the Straits, Asensio, Arrese and Giron, the three germanophil ministers, though they represented the two most powerful forces in the Government, could not carry the day against Jordana, a Minister who seemed to have less influence than they with the Caudillo. Franco was too fully aware of the feeling against war and the increasing goodwill towards Great Britain and the United States to be

rushed into unpopular action. If, however, the discussion in the Council of Ministers had taken place a year previously, when Serrano Suñer was still Minister for Foreign Affairs, and before our economic policy had been effectively developed, I am confident that the interventionists would have won. Intervention would no doubt have meant the ultimate end of totalitarian Spain, but it would also have involved difficulty, delay and danger for an operation in which speed and early success were essential. Thanks to our Spanish policy, our diplomacy was able to aid our strategy. We had created a goodwill upon which we could rely. It was to this fact that I assigned much of our success in keeping Spain quiet at the turning point of the war.

I would not, however, wish it to be thought that our part was greater than it really was. The hard ineluctable facts were moving in our favour. The victories of Alexander and Montgomery were providing unanswerable arguments against the Asensios and Arreses. They were proving that we not only possessed the military resources needed for victory, but that we knew how to use them. Eisenhower's landings, punctual, methodical and irresistible, were confirming the feeling that the German war machine was not invincible. It was these facts that finally made Franco oppose intervention. And it was certainly these facts that put into Jordana's hands the arguments with which he was able to steady the Council of Ministers.

The chapter ended with a personal telegram from the Prime Minister thanking my staff and myself for our part in these events and the following letter of November 27th to me from Mr. Eden:

"The Prime Minister has shown me your letter of the 10th November about the first Spanish reactions to 'Torch.'

"I should like to add to the telegram which he has already sent you my own thanks for your valuable advice when you were last in England and for your successful handling of the Spaniards before and since the operation began.

"Despite the German diplomatic counter-offensive and certain disquieting developments to which you have recently drawn attention, we can, I think, regard the Spanish reactions so far as satisfactory. For this we owe most to the victory of the Eighth Army and to the efficiency with which the landings in North Africa were carried out. But even our military successes would not have had such a healthy influence upon

Spanish policy, had it not been for the patient, skilful and often uphill work which you and your staff have done during the past two years."

When the historian of the future writes the full account of the "Torch" operation, he will, I believe, find throughout the whole field of preparation the same unity of purpose and command that proved so indispensable in Madrid. It was our part to "labour well the minute particulars." My staff and I were glad and proud to think that the chief Torch bearers appreciated our efforts.

Nor could we fail to have a very personal pleasure at the discomfiture of the German Embassy. Even Baroness von Stohrer, who for a German seems to have had an unusual sense of humour, admitted her husband's defeat. Towards the end of the year, she had invited her friends "to see the greatest illusionist in Europe." The large company collected at the Embassy enjoyed in due course the spectacle of a conjurer who put a Nazi youth into a coffin which he sawed in half. He then put the pieces together, opened the coffin and produced an enchanting blonde. At the end of the show the Ambassadors summoned the conjurer, and in the hearing of all her guests said to him: "If you can do that, cannot you put my husband in that coffin and produce Sir Samuel Hoare?" If in place of her husband she had said "the German Embassy" and in place of Sir Samuel Hoare "the British Embassy" her *bon mot* would have displayed remarkable insight into what had been happening in the preparations for Torch.

Von Stohrer was certainly out of luck. He had given a dinner party two days before the landings. An officer of the Spanish naval staff, who was present, insisted that the Allied expedition was destined for Africa. The Ambassador scouted the suggestion and declared that he had the best possible information that the objectives were Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean. The naval officer refused to change his view, and was indeed so persistent that von Stohrer eventually reported it to Berlin but with a note that stated that it was a Spanish opinion and that all the German intelligence organisations in Spain were unanimous against the idea of an African invasion.

The bitter tongues of Madrid soon took up the tale. When Von Stohrer was recalled in disgrace, the *chiste* was that I was retiring and he succeeding me as British Ambassador.

Part III

1943. FRANCO'S NON-BELLIGERENCY

"The man could escape even now if he would make up his mind to leave behind his baggage. . . ."

(Marshal Foch of Ludendorf, Oct. 1918).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE YEAR had finished well, so well indeed that it might have been expected that 1943 would see in Spain a return to genuine neutrality. The African campaign was to end in the extermination of Rommel's army and the reopening of the Mediterranean to Allied shipping. Mussolini and Fascism were to collapse in Italy. The mobilisation of Anglo-American resources was to reach an unprecedented scale. Jordana, a germanophobe Spaniard, was at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and Carceller, a hard-headed Catalan, anxious to do business with the Allies, at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The prospect was far brighter than at any previous period of my mission. Yet, in spite of the obvious signs of Allied strength, the year was to be one of incessant controversy between the British and Spanish governments. Was it Spanish pride that accounted for the hesitation to admit accomplished facts? Or Spanish isolation that made the Spanish Government indifferent to the course of events outside Spain?

My own view is that it was chiefly due to Franco's impenetrable complacency. He had convinced himself that the Allies could never win and that the African victories were only an interlude in a war of many years and constant vicissitudes. As he was sure that the Allies would sooner or later meet with new reverses, the wise course seemed to him to play with both sides and appear at the end as the broker between them. In the meanwhile, being supremely confident of his own pilotage, he would steer a varying course according to the prevalent winds. This answer explains many of the developments in the course of the year. It explains for instance his contention that there were two separate wars in

progress, the war in the east against communism in which Spain was directly involved, and the war in the west between the Anglo-Saxon powers and Germany in which Spain took no part. By this process of reasoning he hoped to find a justification for the help that he continued to offer the Germans, and the constant support that he gave to the Falange in the internal administration of Spain, and at the same time to satisfy the Allies that he was not hostile to them in the west.

Be this as it may, it was clear in the early months of the year that there were many obstacles in the way of better relations between us.

I did my best to clear the air. I took the first opportunity that I had of a talk with him to insist upon the need of a general stock-taking. It was at the annual Epiphany banquet at the Royal Palace when, having broken the cordon of German diplomats that invariably encircled him, I succeeded in drawing him into conversation. He suggested that I should take up the question in detail with Jordana. For some weeks I heard nothing more of my suggestion. Eventually, however, Jordana mentioned it to me. We then agreed to exchange confidential memoranda that would form the basis of subsequent discussion. I started the exchange. He replied with a statement of the Spanish case, and I ended the correspondence with my final comments. As these memoranda explain the position as both sides saw it in February, 1943, it is well to give them in full, and begin with the notes that started the discussion.

PERSONAL MEMORANDUM AS A BASIS OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN
THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR AND COUNT JORDANA.

19 February, 1943.

1. *The present position of the war as seen by the British Government.*

"Events are moving very swiftly in the world, and it is wise for every country, neutral as well as belligerent, to take stock of the position. It will, therefore, be of interest to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to know the impression of the British Government upon the state of the war. I am therefore authorised to put before him certain facts that, in our view, have a direct bearing upon forthcoming events. The British Government are not so foolish as to underrate the great strength of the German military machine, or to make easy and optimistic forecasts and promises about the future. Mr. Churchill, in particular, has never underrated our enemy's

strength, or the great effort that is needed by the Allies if they are to achieve victory in the near future.

"None the less, basing themselves on actual facts, the British Government are now completely confident not only that the Allies cannot be beaten but that the Allies can and will win a decisive victory.

"The three reasons for an Allied victory.

"The three main grounds for their confidence are:

"1. The growing superiority, both in quantity and quality, of Allied munitions, particularly aircraft, over the Axis munitions.

"2. The Führer's failure to reconcile any of the territories that he has occupied.

"3. The war on two European fronts that is now made possible by the Russian successes, and our impending offensives in the course of the next few months.

"The following facts and figures support the British view. They illustrate for the most part the present state of the British war effort. It should be noted that they do not take account of the immense effort now being made by the United States of America or the great resources in men and materials of Russia.

"The British Army.

"I start with the Army, the Service in which we have always been very weak as compared with Germany and continental countries. Although it is often said that we are not a military nation, yet to-day, the British Army, namely the Army of the United Kingdom, the Dominions and India, is now six millions, that is to say, nearly equal in numbers to the $6\frac{1}{2}$ millions of the German Army. Moreover, after losses of more than 4 millions, the German Army will undoubtedly be reduced, possibly by as much as 40 divisions, during 1943. In addition to the 6 million of the British Army, the U.S.A. Army is now $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions and the Russian 14 millions.

"The Royal Navy.

"As to the Royal Navy, in spite of heavy losses, it is substantially stronger to-day than it was at the beginning of the war. As a single example of the Navy's activities, between November 8th and January 8th, the two months that began

with the landing of the Allied Forces in North Africa, the Navy escorted 971 transport supply ships and other vessels with a tonnage of 7,600,000 tons with practically no loss.

"As to the Merchant Navy, we have certainly suffered heavy losses but by no means so heavy as the Axis claims. In any case, the British Navy has now reached a point when, apart from its increasing success in fighting submarines, as is shown by the fact that our losses in December and January were the lowest for 12 months, the new construction of fighting and merchant shipping in the Empire and the United States of America is more than keeping pace with our losses. Great Britain has been building at the rate of 2 million tons a year, and in the last ten months the United States of America have turned out 10 million tons of new construction, and Canada, a country that hitherto built very few ships, has turned out 500,000 tons. The United States programme for 1945 is no less than 24 million tons.

"British Air Power.

"As to the air, the importance of the change that has taken place since the Battle of Britain cannot be exaggerated. Whilst the German Air Force is definitely weaker than it was in August, 1940, the British Air Force is many times greater in quantity and stronger in types of machines and bombs. To-day, the Royal Air Force is greater in quantity and better in quality than the combined Air Forces of Germany and Italy.

"British production of aircraft is also greater than German and Italian production combined, and, in addition to British production, the United States of America are at present producing 5500 machines a month.

"The growing power of Great Britain in the air is shown by the fact the Royal Air Force can now make simultaneous raids from England in a single night upon targets as distant and different as Lorient, Spezzia, Cologne and Turin. With the new types of British day bombers, the Royal Air Force can raid Germany by day, and thus ensure continuous attacks by day and night.

"Moreover, whilst the Allied production of machines will rise steeply in the next few months, German production is falling, and the German Air Force is already forced to draw on reserves and training machines for military operations, and thus still further to weaken itself for the future. It is

unnecessary to point out in detail the immense possibilities now given to the Allies by an air superiority that, with every month that passes, will prove more and more decisive.

"British Labour.

"As to labour, it is certain that whilst the great British effort of total mobilisation is now only beginning to give its full results, the German effort, in spite of the new campaign, is showing signs of diminishing. Not less than a quarter of the German labour supply is foreign and potentially hostile, half of it being Polish and Russian, output per head is falling off, and the German Government is now faced with the dilemma of either reducing the Army or of reducing German industrial and agricultural output.

"European Discontent.

"These are formidable facts when it is remembered that the greater part of Europe is only waiting for signs of German weakness to rise against the power that has occupied their countries.

"Hitler's Prestige.

"They are also formidable facts for another reason. They make it very unlikely, particularly after the Russian defeats, that the Führer, whose popularity and power have always depended upon success, will be able to launch anywhere a successful new offensive upon a great scale, and recover his waning prestige.

"The alleged Russian Peril.

"Judging from the recent speeches of German leaders, the gravity of the situation is now realised in Germany. The shock to German opinion has been all the heavier from the fact that, until a few days ago, the truth has been hidden from the German public, and the impression maintained by official propaganda that everywhere the fortunes of war were going in German favour.

"German propaganda is now adopting a new tune. It is appealing to Europe to join in a great crusade against Russia. The British Government wish to point out that had not Germany made an agreement with Russia in 1939, Catholic Poland would never have been overrun, and that, if in 1941

the Führer had not treacherously attacked his ally, Russia would never have entered the war on the side of the Allies. If, therefore, there were a Russian danger to European civilisation, the blame should rest entirely on Nazi Germany.

"The reasons for confidence."

"The British Government do not, however, admit this danger. The victory at the end of this war will be an Allied, not a Russian victory, namely a victory in which the British Empire and the United States of America will exercise the greatest possible influence. Moreover, M. Stalin declared on November 6th, 1942, that it was not the future policy of Russia to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. The stories that Mr. Churchill and M. Stalin agreed in Moscow upon the partition of Europe into two zones of British and Russian influence are untrue. They never discussed the future of Europe at all.

"This being so, the British Government see no justification either for the German propaganda, or the fears of neutral countries, that Russian victories mean a Communist domination of Europe. The British Empire and the United States have already pledged themselves to organise supplies of food and raw materials for post-war Europe, and to keep garrisons in occupied areas as a safeguard against anarchy and chaos. By these means they hope to avoid the dangers that threatened Europe after the last war.

"The future of Europe."

"They have also made it clear that they have no intention of following the Nazi example by attempting to impose a uniform system of government on Europe. They believe that one of the greatest gifts bestowed on the world by European civilisation is its variety of culture and its wealth of political experience. They look forward, therefore, to a post-war continent in which the historic countries of Europe will preserve their traditions and institutions, and will be able to enjoy them without the constant threat of ultimatums and invasion."

A few days afterwards I received the following personal rejoinder from Jordana:

"An error frequently made by nations is to suppose that the world remains fixed in a particular international situation, when in reality the situation may easily change as a result of the most fortuitous and unexpected causes. Communism is the great danger threatening the world and if in addition it appears supported by the formidable force of a Great Power it is natural that all those who are not blinded by their actual situation should feel alarm. We Spaniards are not alone in feeling this alarm, since it is shared by other nations and principally those who are near to Russia. The sympathies of those countries go undoubtedly towards anything which constitutes an opposition to the Soviet forces, and if Russia were victorious we consider England, too, would certainly have to take up this attitude, and it might well be that she would then not consider excessive our fears of the present moment, and would appreciate the necessity of joining up with those who are opposing this danger.

"We, who are not and have no wish to be in the war, view events with great impartiality. We are certain that there exists a real European interest which at once encourages us and causes us concern. But England, as a result of the passions which war necessarily carries with it, is, in our opinion, at the present moment set on a course which is contrary to her own interest, since it may be affirmed, judging from appearances, that the factor which has changed the situation of the Allies in the war up to now has been principally the pressure of Russia. If events develop in the future as they have done up to now, it would be Russia which will penetrate deeply into German territory. And we ask the question: if this should occur, which is the greater danger not only for the continent but for England herself, a Germany not totally defeated and with sufficient strength to serve as a rampart against Communism, a Germany hated by all her neighbours, which would deprive her of authority though she remained intact, or a Sovietized Germany which would certainly furnish Russia with the added strength of her war preparations, her engineers, her specialised workmen and technicians, which would enable Russia to extend herself with an empire without precedent from the Atlantic to the Pacific? In our opinion, if until recently Russia constituted the greatest danger which has threatened Europe, her present military and industrial power and the strength shown by her totalitarian

Communist regime, cause the Russian nation at the present moment to be infinitely more feared than she was formerly. And we ask a second question: is there anybody in the centre of Europe, in that mosaic of countries without consistency or unity, bled moreover by war and foreign domination, who could contain the ambitions of Stalin? There is certainly no one. From France herself, vanquished, divided, in complete chaos and incapable of reaction in any sense, nothing may be expected but complications. We may be sure that after the German domination, the only domination which could live in these countries is Communism. For this reason we consider the situation as extremely grave and think that people in England should reflect calmly on the matter, since should Russia succeed in conquering Germany, there will be no one who can contain her. Germany is the only existing force in the centre of Europe capable of realising the great universal work of containing and even destroying Communism, and in the face of this danger, for the sake of European solidarity, all minor divisions should disappear so that we can confront this grave problem which hangs over us. If Germany did not exist, Europeans would have to invent her and it would be ridiculous to think that her place could be taken by a confederation of Lithuanians, Poles, Czechs and Roumanians which would rapidly be converted into so many more states of the Soviet confederation.

“For similar considerations of European solidarity, we desire the re-establishment of European interests in Asia, and in this European solidarity we are not thinking only of economic conveniences but also of our culture and the civilising work that the white nations have done there and that our own nation carried out in those lands of the East, as also the spread of the Christian faith, which would disappear with the triumph of Japan just as it would with the triumph of China or Russia.

“These arguments will, I think, justify in the eyes of the British Ambassador and the British Government the anxieties felt by our nation, and our desire for a close European collaboration in defence of our common interests which would make it possible to sweep away once and for all the great problem of Communism, would re-establish our position and our prestige in Asia, reduce the expansion of Japan and restore normality

to the continent of Africa. Germany is a reality of 80 million souls and Italy is another reality of 42 million.

"We should not be unreflecting enough to think in terms of eternal peace, since we have seen that it lasts for twenty years. The best service which can be rendered to Europe and the wise thing to do is not to miss the right moments for making peace, since such moments pass and situations change for the worse.

"A long war benefits nobody. No victory makes it worth while and our impression is that notwithstanding the enormous preparations in material and the efforts which the Allies are disposed to make, they will have to force Germany to undo the work she has already done and after that ultimately conquer in her own territory this nation which is disposed to triumph or die. Victory and defeat do not depend alone on forecasts or on accumulations of material. History shows us at every moment how casual facts which escaped forecast and the direction of the protagonists in a war upset what was prepared and convert victory into defeat or defeat into victory. As long as weapons clash there can be no certainty of triumph, and to fail to make use of propitious opportunities imposes on him who makes such an error a grave responsibility before History, before the world, and before his own country."

It will be seen that the Minister's reply whilst ignoring my specific points diverted the discussion to the Communist peril. Indeed, there were few ministerial discussions in Spain that did not end with an argument about a Red revolution. Throughout the whole of my mission I heard the same story and the same advice. "Why are you English so blind to the threat that overshadows Europe? Why do you not break away from the Russian alliance that will eventually destroy you, and join with Spain in an anti-Bolshevik campaign?" The Germans exploited to the full these Spanish fears. Reports from German sources continually reached me to the effect that Stalin was negotiating a separate peace with Hitler and that if we did not break with Russia, Russia would break with us. Hitler, the reports continued, admired England and wished for our friendship. Let the war end in the west and continue in the east with England as an ally in an anti-Comintern crusade.

This flagrant propaganda would have excited nothing but contempt in England. In Spain, however, still under the cloud of

the Civil War, it was accepted as incontrovertible truth. It was therefore very necessary for me to take up the argument in Jordana's memorandum and once again make clear our unshakable position.

This, then, was my answer to the case that he had put to me:

Personal observations by the British Ambassador in a conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, February 25th, 1943.

"I am very grateful for the Minister for Foreign Affairs' memorandum. It is wise to discuss with each other our respective anxieties. I hope to show that the Minister for Foreign Affairs' anxieties are not justified.

"The Minister says that the great danger to Europe is Communism and that a Russian victory will make all Europe Communist. The result, as he believes, will be the destruction of European civilisation and Christian culture. The British view is very different, and I suggest that it is well worthy of the Minister's careful attention. I will, therefore, state it as simply and shortly as I can. Let me first, however, make one point clear to avoid the possibility of future misunderstandings. The statement made by Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt at the Casablanca Conference represents the unalterable decision of the Allies, i.e. (i) to fight the war to a decisive finish; (ii) to maintain a solid front in which no Ally will act separately or divergently from the others. There can, therefore, be neither any premature peace, nor any separate peace between one section of the Allies and the Axis.

"Having made this point clear, let me proceed to the main argument of the Minister, that a Russian victory will plunge Europe into Communism and mean the Russian domination of Europe after the war. If this assertion is true, why did Hitler make an alliance with Russia in 1939 and boast of his 'eternal friendship with the Soviet Union'? Why did Hitler destroy Poland, one of the former bulwarks against a possible Russian aggression?

"There is, however, another vital question. Will any single country be able to dominate Europe at the end of this war? Russia, at least, will need a long period of reconstruction and recovery in which she will depend greatly upon the British Empire and the United States of America for economic help. The Minister seems to think that Russia will, none the

less, possess the increased prestige of having alone won the war. So far from the British underrating the Russian effort, they regard it as one of the greatest achievements in military history. We have always said that our Russian Allies were fighting magnificently, even when many people were saying that they could not fight at all and that the Russian army was finished as a military force. Whilst, however, giving full credit and admiration to the Russian army, we are convinced that the final victory will not be the victory of any single Ally but of all the Allies, and that it will be a victory in which we and the United States of America will inevitably exercise a very great influence. Even if the war ended to-day it would not end with an exclusively Russian victory. Without the support of British sea and air power in the west, and without American and Australian pressure on Japan in the east, the Russian armies could not have achieved their recent successes. The victory, therefore, would even to-day be an Allied victory. But the war is not ending to-day. A new chapter is beginning and it is a chapter in which the British Empire and the United States of America are likely to take a predominant part.

"I suggest, therefore, that the Minister for Foreign Affairs should study dispassionately the position as it is likely to be at the moment of an Allied victory.

"There will then undoubtedly be great British and American armies on the Continent. These armies will be equipped with the finest modern munitions. They will be composed of fresh, first line troops, whose ranks have not been previously devastated by years of exhausting war on the Russian front.

"As for ourselves, I make the confident prophecy that at that moment Great Britain will be the strongest European military Power. The British Air Force will be the most powerful in Europe. Our new armies will be certainly as efficient as any other European armies, and, for the first time for many years, they will be strong numerically as well as in quality. Moreover, the British Army and the British Air Force will have behind them the British Navy, at that time the most predominant navy that Europe has ever seen in the hands of a single European Power.

"The Minister should particularly consider the probable position of the British Navy at the end of the war. Assuming an Allied victory, the war will end with the British Navy as

the only strong European navy. The German and Italian navies will, as a result of defeat, have ceased to exist as future rivals or competitors with the British Navy. The French Navy will have been gravely weakened, whilst it will take Russia many years to build a great fleet. Moreover, an Allied victory over Japan will free the British Navy from one of its most exacting duties, the protection of British interests in the Far East against Japan. The British Navy will, therefore, be far stronger in European waters than at any time since 1815. This is a fact of great military and political importance, that bears directly upon the future of Europe.

"This, then, is the state of affairs to be contemplated at the end of the war. British influence, it seems to me, will be then stronger in Europe than at any time since the fall of Napoleon. More than this, for the first time for many years, British influence will be supported by very great military, naval and air force. We have no intention of using this military strength for dominating other European Powers. We shall not, however, shirk our responsibilities to European civilisation or throw away our great strength by premature or unilateral disarmament. Having, with our Allies, won the war, we intend to maintain our full influence in Europe, and to take our full share in its reconstruction. After a unique and gigantic effort that has lasted more than three years, the British Empire has now been mobilised. Its almost limitless strength will, I am confident, be used as a stabilising element in the interests of European peace. In stating this, I am not accepting the Minister's view that Russia is the great danger to Europe. I am convinced that Nazism is the real danger to Europe. Nor am I accepting the Minister's view that Russia will embark upon an anti-European policy. I am dealing solely with the Minister's assertion that at the end of the war Russia will be the only military Power to count in Europe. If, therefore, I emphasise the strength of the British Empire, it is not to suggest any hostility to Russia in the future. It is simply to state the fact that there will be another great military power in Europe, the British Empire. This fact in no way suggests the likelihood of a future conflict between the British Empire and Russia. There is no reason to think that the alliance formed under the stress of war will not continue in the peace and provide a peaceful and stabilising force in European politics."

42 were released. In view of the shortage of trained German submarine crews, this mattered more than what happened to the submarine.

“(c) The German supply ship *Bessel* and two tankers at Vigo, which could easily have left through territorial waters for France, have been kept by the Germans in Vigo, obviously for war purposes. Refuelling submarines was suspected, but repeated representations by the Embassy went unheeded until admission by the crew of a captured submarine that they had actually refuelled and provisioned in Vigo three days before capture removed all doubt. Even then, though Spanish guards were placed on the tankers which were moved under supervision, the *Bessel* was left for nearly another year, conveniently far out and with no guards on board. Though the number of Axis submarines which availed themselves of these facilities is not known, the failure of the Spanish authorities to take adequate precautions meant that they were available to Axis submarines for at least three and a half years. Relief submarine crews were also allowed to pass to and fro across Spanish territory.

“(d) In Las Palmas the German ships *Corrientes* and *Charlotta Schliemann* were suspiciously anchored where submarines could be supplied unobserved. After many months of representations both ships were moved to the inner harbour. After a short spell the *Corrientes* was significantly moved out again.

“(e) For two years the Embassy complained of the supplying of Axis submarines in Cadiz by the Italian ship *Fulgor*. Documents captured on an Italian submarine have revealed that the *Fulgor* had been specially fitted out as a submarine supply ship for fuel, with all equipment including torpedoes, and left in Cadiz for that specific purpose. Detailed instructions were included to Italian submarine commanders how to come alongside in various tides and winds.

“2. *Forced landed aircraft and air crews.*

“For over two and a half years Axis forced-landed air crews were at once repatriated, while British air crews were detained. A German hydroplane and a land plane which forced-landed in Galicia in the summer of 1942 were, contrary to International law, allowed to refuel and depart. Italian airplanes were not prevented from regularly attacking Gibraltar over Spanish territory, their forced-landed air crews were repatri-

ated, and there were three known instances of Italian planes which had attacked Gibraltar being allowed to land and refuel in the Balearic Islands. The British ship *Sarastone* was sunk at Huelva by a German aeroplane which flew over Spanish territory and was guided by signal from the Italian ship *Gaeta* in Huelva harbour. No satisfaction was given to His Majesty's Government over the *Gaeta*, which is still in Huelva as a sabotage depot working against British shipping.

"3. *Other Axis use of Spanish territory for belligerent purposes.*

"(a) Axis agents have been allowed to build up a vast organisation chiefly in Seville, Huelva, La Linea, Algeciras and Melilla, for sabotaging British ships by placing bombs on board, or fixing them to their keels. Repeated representations have had little effect and recent incidents have shown that the organisation is to-day larger and more active than ever.

"(b) Facilities were granted in 1942 to the Germans to set up night observation stations on both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar, even in Spanish military zones, with the most modern equipment. Owing to British representations, these plans were not fully carried out, but German and Italian observation posts still exist on both sides of the Straits for the purpose of operating against the United Nations.

"(c) Apart from the above, the Germans have been allowed to build up on Spanish territory on both sides of the Straits a vast espionage organisation, and to instal with impunity wireless transmitting stations in the Villa Leon at Algeciras, and observation apparatus in a villa nearby, and other observation and radio transmitting stations at Ceuta and Tangier. The Italians, apart from a military mission in Ceuta, which is difficult to justify, also have a villa and transmitting set there. Full particulars regarding the location of these stations have been given to the Spanish Government, but nothing has been done to stop their illegal activities, though they are tantamount to acts of war committed by belligerents on Spanish territory. Names and full details regarding the personnel of the German espionage organisation, many of whom are serving soldiers working under German military orders on Spanish sovereign territory, together with names of the German wireless operators, have also been given to the Spanish Government, but little or nothing has been done to break up the organisation and eject the personnel from Spanish territory.

"(d) The Germans have also been allowed to build up a

network of meteorological and observation stations in Spanish territory in Galicia.

"(e) Despite the existing international treaties, the International zone of Tangier has been occupied by Spanish forces. One of the results of this occupation is that the Tangier zone has become available to the Germans for purposes of espionage and acts of war against the United Nations, and the Germans have been allowed, with no legal basis, to establish a Consulate-General in Tangier, whose chief functions are to provide cover for espionage and sabotage agents, and to conduct subversive propaganda amongst the Moors in Tangier, the Spanish zone and French North Africa.

"4. On the other hand, the Spanish Government have for eleven months withheld agreement to the establishment of a British Vice-Consulate at Ceuta. This proposal was submitted to the Spanish Government on October 6th, 1942. The note explained the urgent need for a British Vice-Consulate at Ceuta in the interests of Spanish shipping, as without it Spanish ships' captains have to journey to Tetuan to obtain navicerts.

"On April 30th, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were reminded that His Majesty's Government could claim the right to establish a consular post at Ceuta under Article 20 of the Anglo-Spanish Commercial Agreement of 1922. The reason given by the Ministry for withholding their permission is that the Japanese are demanding permission to establish a Vice-Consulate there and the Germans will also demand it if permission is granted to the British. This argument is completely untenable as neither the Japanese nor the other Axis powers have any interest in Consulates in Ceuta except as cover for espionage and sabotage activities, whereas His Majesty's Government have the right to establish one and Spanish shipping interests urgently require it. Axis claims can therefore be easily disposed of. There is already an American Vice-Consulate at Ceuta, and there is no valid reason for refusing a British one.

"5. For three and a half years British and Allied civilians of military age have not been allowed to pass through Spanish territory or travel on Spanish ships, while German and Italian civilians of military age have been allowed to come and go as they pleased. Moreover, the members of the German and Italian Armistice Commission in North Africa who took

refuge in the Spanish Zone of Tangier, the majority of whom were military personnel, were repatriated instead of being interned. A German military airplane, fully armed, and carrying important members of the German Armistice Commission in military uniform with side arms, was even allowed to land at Barcelona and take off again instead of being interned with its occupants in accordance with International Law.

"6. The hostility of the Spanish administration to British subjects has shown itself in the persistent issue of expulsion orders against them. With the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it has been possible to have several of these orders suspended though hardly ever to have them cancelled. Nevertheless, in a period of twenty-four months, thirty-four British subjects have been expelled from Spain. The Embassy is convinced that, with the exception possibly of two cases of immorality, there was no justification whatsoever for these expulsion orders, which seem to have been issued on the flimsiest pretexts. While in many cases their origin was obviously German, in others it was a *denuncia* by someone who wanted somebody else's job. What matters in Anglo-Spanish relations is that the Falange, and indeed the Spanish police, always seem to seize whatever opportunity offers to penalise British subjects.

"7. On this point Spaniards who think it worth while to study the English, will note that while it is impossible to make them prepare for war, and difficult to make them fight, there was once a 'War of Jenkins' Ear.' Maltreatment of British subjects, however humble, is one of the things the British people will never forgive and never forget. The two years' imprisonment in mediæval conditions which Mr. Apfel of the Port of Gandia suffered, remains a grave issue with British public opinion. When Sir Samuel Hoare became British Ambassador in Spain one of the first questions he took up with the Head of the Spanish State was the outrageous treatment by the Spanish police of a newly-arrived Embassy typist. Cases like these are sufficient to prove the unneutral attitude of the Spanish Government.

"Discrimination between the treatment given to British and German publicity in Spain.

"8. While German newspapers flood Spain, British news-

papers are still excluded. The Spanish Government has chosen to leave the Spanish press and radio in the hands of Falange; and Falange has chosen to use that control to give the world the impression, rightly or wrongly, that Spain is wedded to 'Fascism' and that the Spanish press and radio do exactly what the Germans tell them to do. There has been some change recently, but there will be no effect upon world opinion, until what is told to diplomats coincides with what the Spanish press and radio and ministerial speeches in Spain tell the world. Time, in fact, on this point, is running out.

"9. Interest in news from Allied sources is still regarded by many Spanish authorities as a crime, and cases are continually arising of persons being arrested, maltreated, fined or imprisoned for reading or having in their possession copies of the B.B.C. news sheet. Messenger boys employed by the Embassy have been persistently persecuted by the Spanish and Falange police, have had their envelopes confiscated, and at times have been beaten with the grossest brutality.

"10. At Tarragona there are continuous activities of an anti-British nature on the part of members of the local Falange organisation. The British Vice-Consul has been threatened on the telephone by a person claiming to be speaking for the investigation service of the Falange and Blue Division with dire penalties if he continued to carry out his legitimate activities as British Vice-Consul. Persons visiting the Vice-Consulate on economic or commercial matters have been threatened and several have been molested, their houses broken into and their wireless sets smashed for having been found reading copies of the B.B.C. news sheet.

"11. At Bilbao a messenger and member of the staff of the British Consulate was taken to the police station where he was kept for twelve hours, threatened with a beating and questioned continuously about his work, the sole pretext being that he was found to be carrying a copy of the current daily shipping list compiled at the Consulate.

"12. Postal correspondence of His Majesty's Embassy and Consulates in Spain is continually being intercepted. Postal packages properly stamped have not been delivered and have been sold to a paper factory for pulping.

"13. The Spanish censorship authorities refuse to allow the

B.B.C. timetable to be published in the Spanish press, which regularly published the 'Voz de Alemania.'

"14. The NO-DO official Spanish newsreel which is now in its thirteenth edition has only twice given any pictures of Allied war activities. These were short and garbled stories in their first and sixth newsreels. War pictures from Axis sources are given in every edition.

"15. Complete freedom of action is given to the distribution throughout Spain of every sort and kind of German propaganda, including the most scurrilous leaflets and pamphlets, which are openly distributed in the streets and cafés. Copies of the German bulletin for the *autoridades* are distributed round private houses. The Germans print and distribute anonymous leaflets purporting to come from Spanish sources and calculated to sow distrust between His Majesty's Government and the Spanish Government.

"16. German propaganda offices function openly in various towns and are responsible for inserting scurrilous articles about the United Nations in the Spanish press, distributing German propaganda and flagrantly ignoring the Spanish regulations. The German pseudo-tourist agency 'Alemania' in the Calle de Alcalá, Madrid, exists solely for the showing and distributing of propaganda. The German propaganda bureau in Cartagena prints locally some 3000 bulletins daily and distributes them to all and sundry. The police neither interfere with their activities nor persecute the recipients of the bulletins. No such British propaganda offices are permitted and the German, according to the existing Spanish decrees, should be closed.

"17. In Fernando Po the Governor General gives free rein to the distribution not only of German news, but also all sorts of scurrilous propaganda, and prohibits the distribution by the British Consulate of the B.B.C news sheet in Spanish. The only newspaper published in the island, *Ebano*, publishes only the war communiques of the Axis.

"18. The agreement reached with the High Commissioner for Spain in Morocco, against the circulation of offensive propaganda in Arabic, is scrupulously respected by His Majesty's Government and repeatedly broken by the Axis. The latest instance is the publication of an extremely tendentious and offensive anti-British booklet in Arabic which is now in circulation in Tangier.

"19. While German newspapers flood Spain, the entry of all British newspapers is prohibited.

"The Blue Division.

"20. Meanwhile the Blue Division remains in Russia, and looks, unless quick action is taken, like being the last non-German force left fighting for the Germans. Events, in fact are developing very fast and Spain is in serious danger of being overtaken by them."

Not one of the charges in this formidable remonstrance was rebutted. The only response and that after a considerable delay was a countercharge that British aeroplanes had flown over Spanish territory and that Spanish ships had been intercepted by the Royal Navy.

There, then, the exchange of views ended for the time. Jordana had certainly wished to carry them to a friendly conclusion but Franco was definitely opposed to any change of policy or any drastic action to remedy our grievances.

The new German Ambassador, von Moltke, whilst outwardly adopting a more conciliatory attitude than von Stohrer's, was cunningly active behind the scenes, and according to my reports was gaining a considerable influence in Government circles. He and Lazar lost no chance exploiting any Allied set-backs in Africa. They also seemed to think it worth while to make many personal attacks on me.

It was at this time that they invented the story that I had become a Roman Catholic. Their intention was probably to discredit me with the church authorities by making it appear that I made the change for the sole purpose of gaining influence in Spain. The lie was sent spinning round by Lazar's machine, and eventually appeared in print in the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* of May 16th. It is worth quoting some paragraphs from the article as a sample of this ponderous and vicious propaganda:

"Sir Samuel Hoare wird katholisch.

"Sir Samuel Hoare, now British Ambassador at Madrid, has entered the Catholic Church. This news, which comes from political circles in Madrid, is completed by the following details. At the end of the month Sir Samuel Hoare was officially received as a member of the Catholic Church in the Convent of Montserrat. His official reception into the Catholic

Church is a political incident of great importance. If it had not been for the publicity surrounding it, we might have ignored it. As it is, the following are the facts connected with it. The British Ambassador in Madrid must clearly show his fitness for the post. Sir Samuel Hoare being a realist has recognised the advantage from this point of view of becoming a Catholic. The Foreign Office is the citadel of the numerically weak English Catholics. In this milieu religious belief is no longer a part of the private life of an individual. It is part of his political capacity and equipment. In the case of Sir Samuel Hoare, accredited to a Catholic country, it is necessary for him to adapt himself to his functions. In Germany this is called 'throwing the sausage after the ham.' We cannot find a better definition of this change of confession than the definition of a diplomat given by the *World's News*, Sydney—'a Diplomat is a gentleman who is able to tell another gentleman a lie in such a form that the second "gentleman" is obliged to pretend to believe the first "gentleman" though he knows that the first "gentleman" is a liar who himself knows that the second "gentleman" does not believe him.' By this means the realist Sir Samuel tries to trap his Spanish hosts."

I should have hoped that this ridiculous attempt to undermine my influence would have been treated with the contempt that it deserved. Several Allied newspapers and press agencies, however, fell headlong into the German trap, and did Lazar's work for him by sending the story round the world. As a result, many inquiries arrived from London, most of them foolishly assuming that the story was true. I finally exposed its source and laid it to rest in a letter to my Chelsea constituents.

This incident did not stand by itself. The campaign, obviously stimulated by the Germans, was revived against many Spaniards who were supposed to be anglophils. The two most prominent anglophil generals, Aranda and Kindelán, were removed from their posts, and many lesser known friends of ours were arrested.

These persecutions were particularly vindictive in Tangier where in spite of the Spanish guarantee of British rights there was constant interference with the circulation of the *Tangier Gazette*, the administration of the British post office and the private affairs of British subjects. The Germans, although they had been excluded by the Versailles Treaty from any share in the

government of the zone, had returned to Tangier in force where they had occupied the Mendoub's palace, the principal house in the town, and had organised a network of espionage and sabotage organisations. General Orgaz, the High Commissioner of the Spanish zone, regarded any protest that Mr. Gascoigne in Tangier or I in Madrid made against these scandals as a personal attack upon himself. He was completely in the hands of germanophil officials whose interests were inextricably tied up with a German victory. The result was the frustration of Jordana's genuine efforts to meet our demands. Month after month went by, indeed, year after year, and the German Consulate General in Tangier remained one of the most dangerous centres of German espionage in the Mediterranean area.

There were moments when I believed that I had made some impression on the Spanish Government and that these unneutral activities would be stopped. The Minister for Foreign Affairs would obtain Franco's approval for the search of a German radio station or the expulsion of a German agent. The order would go to Morocco, and the local authorities would immediately warn the Germans of the impending action. The Spanish police would after due warning arrive at the German station and find an empty house and no radio installation. When they went to expel the agent, they would be told that he had vanished. This game of cross questions and crooked answers was to last until the end of the war.

Much the same game was played with the Axis ships that had remained in Spanish ports since the beginning of the war or had subsequently put in for repairs. Some of them we knew to be refuelling German and Italian submarines. Others, for instance the submarines described in the Grand Remonstrance, were allowed facilities far in excess of the obligations of international law. Here again, Jordana did his best to stop the scandal, but here again he was circumvented by local obstruction and the German party in the government.

The truth was that German corruption had poisoned Spanish official life. There were too many officials in German pay. Spain, if not politically, at least morally was a *pays occupé*. As in France, so in Spain the machine of government was controlled by the Germans. As in France, many officials detested this control, but they could do little or nothing to check it. As also in France, the common people deeply resented it, but even a stubborn and courageous people like the Spaniards were power-

less against the machine-guns and prisons of a totalitarian government.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs continued unabated through the first six months of 1943. It was the subject of many telegrams and despatches between London and Madrid. Should we make a radical change in our Spanish policy? Should we hand Franco an ultimatum to the effect that unless these unneutral acts ceased, we would impose on Spain the full rigours of the blockade? These were the questions that we constantly discussed. They had not, however, changed since the previous year, nor had our answer to them. Once again, on purely personal grounds I should have been glad to bring these irritations to a definite point, and to shake the dust of Spain off my feet. But the issues were not personal. They were still military and political. The African campaign was going well, not perhaps as quickly as some hoped but none the less leading inevitably up to an invasion of the Italian islands and mainland. The staff still needed a quiet Spain on the army's flank. A crisis would at the best have added a disturbing element to the campaign, whilst at the worst, it might have led to active trouble in the Peninsula. The imposition of the full blockade, for instance, would certainly have brought normal life in Spain to a standstill and as a result might easily have let loose uncontrollable and unpredictable forces for the Germans to exploit.

There was a further consideration to be taken into account—the lesson taught by years of experience, that ultimatums do not work with Spaniards. What better example of this fact could there have been than the German experience of the last three years? Although German power from 1940 to 1942 was far more formidable than any that we could exercise in 1943, Hitler's heavy hand had failed to obtain the really great results that he desired. It is true that he had succeeded in corrupting and controlling much of the official life of Spain, but when it came to the big issue of Spanish military intervention, or the passage of German troops through the country, he had never succeeded in getting his way.

In view of this history it seemed most unlikely that in 1943 we should succeed with a big stick where Hitler had failed with a bigger stick in 1940, 1941 and 1942.

These arguments led the Government in London and the Embassy in Madrid to the same conclusion. A fundamental change of policy would be unwise. None the less, as our military

fortunes continued to prosper, so our pressure, and particularly our economic pressure, should be intensified on the Spanish Government. A further attempt should also be made to break through Franco's complacency and convince him of the dangers that Spain was running as the result of his Government's un-neutral behaviour.

This was the background for the very important interview that I had with the Generalissimo at the end of the summer.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

BEFORE, however, I was to see the Caudillo, a dramatic event projected me from Spanish to Italian affairs. Just as I had spent many hours during 1940 and 1941 over our relations with France, so now in August, 1943, I was to become the intermediary between the Italian anti-fascists and the British Government. Once again Madrid proved to be a watchtower from which to observe the course of events on the continent and a listening post to which came many reports and rumours from the countries on the other side of the enemy's curtain.

Ever since I had been in Italy during the last war, I had followed Italian events with the closest interest. I had been so firmly convinced that a friendly Italy was an essential factor in British foreign policy that I had viewed with especially grave anxiety the Italian drift to the Axis.

In Spain, I had expected to find a general sympathy with Mussolini and Fascist policy. The Falange was an obvious imitation of the Fascio. An Italian army had given timely support to Franco at a critical moment of the Civil War, and the leading members of the Spanish Government, particularly Serrano Suñer, were on intimate terms with Mussolini's ministers. Yet in spite of all these reasons for the closest possible friendship between the two countries, I found a widespread dislike of Italy, and, as the war progressed, an outspoken contempt for everything Italian. Spaniards, looking back at the historic past of the Spanish Empire, regarded the Italians as parvenus amongst the Latin Powers. A Latin bloc dominated by Mussolini and based upon an Italian 'mare nostrum' ran counter to Spanish aspirations. So far from feeling gratitude for Italian help in the Civil War, the ordinary Spaniard only remembered the Italian rout at Guadalajara.

The cafés of Madrid were at this time resounding with gibes against the "macarronistas." Every Italian defeat was hailed as a new subject for some biting *chiste*. One of them that I remember was of an Italian officer pursuing a Spanish girl with every kind of passionate appeal. Being repulsed by an averted glance and a stony silence, he at last makes a frantic appeal for one word of encouragement. "Una parola, una parola, Signorina." Turning

her back upon him she accedes to his *cri de coeur*, and hisses "Guadalajara" as she leaves him.

The wide circulation that the Madrid gossips gave to a remark of my own was another good example of Spanish delight over Italian misfortunes. I was attending an official requiem at the Escorial with all the diplomatic corps. Just before the Mass started, a brilliantly decorated diplomat sat down on the vacant chair next mine. In accordance with the protocol, I bowed and shook him by the hand. "What have you been doing?" asked my friend the Portuguese Ambassador as we left the church. "Why have you been shaking hands with the Italian Ambassador?" "I did not know," I answered, "that it was the Italian Ambassador, and if I had known, why should any one object? We do not regard the Italians as belligerents." As this was a moment of continuous Italian defeats, the story went the round of the cafés and added zest to their spiteful ridicule.

During the first six months of 1943 the Spanish critics were given many opportunities for gloating over the inferiority of their Italian cousins. Our victories in North Africa and air raids upon the Italian mainland, were unmistakable evidence that Italy as a military power was ceasing to exist. Reports arrived daily of the confusion and despair in Italian cities. Between Barcelona, Genoa and Milan there were many financial and industrial contacts. The business men who worked between them brought back stories of chaos in Lombardy and Liguria. The Church, particularly the Bishops, and the Provincials of the Regular Orders who made their periodical visits to the Vatican, came back with similar stories of the state of affairs in Rome. The Spanish Government, dominated by the Falange, did its best to suppress the bad news. For months on end, for example, the *Osservatore Romano*, the very well-informed and balanced journal of the Vatican, was rigorously suppressed by Franco's so-called Catholic administration. The great events, however, could not be suppressed. It was impossible to conceal the news of the cabinet crisis on February 10th when Ciano and Grandi were dismissed. On May 7th came the fall of Tunis and Bizerta and the end of Italian power in Africa. On June 11th, the easy capture of Pantellaria marked our irresistible advance across the Sicilian narrows, and on July 10th came the Allied landing in Sicily itself.

By this time every one was certain that the collapse of Fascist Italy was only a matter of weeks. The Spanish Government made a final effort to stem this tide of general feeling by an attempt to

divert it to an unscrupulous campaign against aerial bombardment. Having uttered no word of protest against any German air attack upon undefended cities and civilian populations, they used the threat to Rome as a means of exciting Catholic prejudice against the Allies. An official note appeared in support of the restriction of air warfare, and the Archbishop of Toledo, the Primate of Spain, undoubtedly with official approval, visited me to protest against the bombardment of Rome. I think I was able to convince Jordana of the futility of these protests. The campaign was eventually dropped and the Spanish public left to enjoy, untroubled by Government opposition, the discomfiture of the Italians.

It was in this atmosphere that my assistant Naval attaché, Commander Gomez-Beare, an officer whose well-deserved popularity kept him in close touch with almost everything of importance that happened in Madrid, came on the evening of July 25th to tell me that Mussolini had been dismissed and that King Victor Emmanuel had re-established constitutional government. The great news was soon on the radio. It was then too late at night to obtain any clear impression of its effect. I waited therefore for the morning to see what would be the official reaction. When I looked at the controlled press, I found little more than a bare statement of the fact of Mussolini's dismissal. Evidently the Government did not know what comment they could safely make. When in doubt, however, the Government invariably fell back upon the same expedient—the arrest of members of any potential opposition, monarchists, republicans or communists. Mussolini's fall was one of these occasions. A ferment of rejoicing in the prisons gave the Ministry of the Interior the chance of saying that a Red plot was in progress with the result that many harmless and respectable individuals were immediately arrested.

The following days did not produce the dramatic results that I had expected. I imagined that King Victor Emmanuel would simultaneously with the dismissal of Mussolini have declared an Italian military surrender to the Allies. This was not only the right but also the wise course for him to adopt. Instead of taking this action, he let the following days drift by in a haze of obscurity. The Italian army continued in a half-hearted way to oppose the Allies and the King's manifesto gave the impression that Mussolini's fall had meant a change of political regime rather than an immediate end of the war.

I suppose that the King's inaction can only be explained by

fear of the Germans. He was manœuvring for safer ground from which to make the next move and was evidently thinking that an armistice would be more easily defensible when the Allies had actually landed upon the Italian mainland. I was convinced at the time that these delays, so far from making less dangerous the path from war to peace, would only give the Germans time to strengthen their stranglehold upon the mainland.

The Sicilian campaign had cost the Germans 31,000 casualties and although they had succeeded in withdrawing some thousands of their airborne and Panzer troops to the mainland, they had suffered a major military disaster and were badly shaken as the result. This was surely the moment for King Victor Emmanuel to seize for the Italian surrender. As it was, Italy, during these critical days, remained a no-man's land in which the Italian forces became thoroughly disorganised and the Germans received a heaven-sent opportunity for recovering their morale and reinforcing their army.

The heat at Madrid was at this time insupportable. A torrid summer had reached its climax and every Spaniard who could find a place upon a train or a bed near the sea, had left the capital. The Government had reverted to its former practice of spending the dog days at San Sebastian, leaving the Foreign Ministry in Madrid in the hands of a care and maintenance party. I felt, however, that so many great events were taking place in the world that I could not safely leave the capital. Accordingly the British Embassy did not migrate to San Sebastian and I found myself on Sunday morning, August 13th, the only ambassador in the capital.

I was sitting on the shady side of the house and preparing the notes of my impending interview with Franco, when the porter telephoned from the lodge to say that two men wished to see me. Past experience had convinced me that it was embarrassing and sometimes dangerous to interview any one without a previous appointment. I accordingly answered that I could not receive them, and that they had better write to me and make an appointment. There followed a series of further messages saying that they insisted upon seeing me at once. Eventually, the porter appeared with a letter from Sir D'Arcy Osborne, the British Minister to the Vatican, introducing to me two Italians whose initials he gave as C. and M. I understood at once that my visitors must have some important message to give me. Although, therefore, I was always very careful to have no contacts of any

kind with enemy subjects, I felt that in this case I must see these visitors.

When they came into my room, it was evident that one of them was a soldier. There is no mistaking a continental officer in civilian clothes. Perhaps it is that continental officers wear their uniforms so constantly that they feel ill at ease when they are out of them. Perhaps it is that as they have clearly little need of civilian clothes, their suits sometimes look like museum pieces. One of my visitors was certainly a soldier in civilian clothes and the other I rightly judged to be a young diplomat.

When I asked them the object of their mission, they said that they had come with the full approval of the King and Marshal Badoglio to arrange an armistice. They had wished to leave Italy for this purpose immediately after the fall of Mussolini, but they had not been able to escape. The Germans were in control of all the exits from the country and the only way open to them had been to come to Spain with false passports as members of an official mission that was to meet in Lisbon the returning Italian Minister from Chile. My military visitor declared himself to be General Giuseppe Castellano, the head of the military office of General Ambrosio, the chief of the Italian Staff, and introduced his companion as Signor Montenaro, an official of the Italian Foreign Office. General Castellano was travelling with the passport of an official of the Ministry of Finance and no one outside the negotiations knew anything of his identity, or his companion's. There was need of the greatest possible speed in any negotiation as the *Cabo de Buena Esperanza*, the ship that they were to meet, was expected to arrive in Lisbon on the 20th and they would then have to return immediately with the rest of the diplomatic mission. Could, therefore, I accept an immediate armistice? General Castellano added that he was prepared at once to give me the details and dispositions of the German forces in Italy and to undertake that the Italian armies would forthwith evacuate the Balkans and Croatia. There were at that moment, he said, fifteen German divisions in Italy, including two S.S. divisions, one of them the Adolf Hitler Division that had recently arrived from the Russian front. His information was so circumstantial and his proposal so definite, that he seemed sure that there and then I should be able to agree upon armistice terms under which the Italian army, fleet and air force would come over immediately to the Allied side. Again and again he insisted that an immediate decision was essential. The Germans were already rushing reinforcements

into Italy and a delay of a few days might mean that the Italian army would no longer be a free agent.

I had by this time become convinced that he was making a genuine offer of peace but that it was an offer that I could not possibly accept. Indeed, it was difficult for me even to comment upon it without full instructions from London. I had therefore to tell him that, whilst I would transmit the offer immediately to the British Government, I was not in a position to give him an answer to his proposal or to comment on its practicability. This reply took him aback. He said that he had come to me as a tried friend of Italy who would be able to give his country swift and effective help. If I could not discuss the details of an armistice with him, could he not discuss them with my military attaché? I told him that what I had said, covered not only myself but all the personnel of the British Embassy and that in any case a detailed negotiation of this kind in Madrid was extremely dangerous. German agents were around us on every side, and it was quite possible that his visit to me that morning had already been reported to Berlin by the agents of the Gestapo. I advised him therefore to carry out his plan of proceeding to Lisbon and I undertook that in the meanwhile I would suggest to London that some high military authority should meet him there with definite authority to discuss the terms of an armistice.

Before he agreed to this suggestion we had a long talk upon the general position in Italy. He described to me in detail the history of the political *coup d'état*. The version that he gave me differed in one important respect from the account that Count Grandi subsequently sent me from Lisbon. Comparing the two descriptions, I would guess that there existed considerable suspicion between the army leaders and the politicians. Count Grandi was undoubtedly determined to get rid of Mussolini and had the courage of his opinions in the critical meeting of the Grand Council on the evening of July 24th. It was his action that rallied the opposition and finally led to Mussolini's dismissal. The army leaders, however, whilst ready to accept his help were suspicious of his ultimate intentions. They seem to have believed that he was thinking not so much of Mussolini's fall as of his own rise to power as the Duce's successor. Count Grandi's letters to Marshal Badoglio and the Minister of the Court make it plain that he was not thinking of the succession. General Castellano, however, represented the army view that, whilst Count Grandi had been invaluable for the *coup de grâce*, he was not in the full

confidence of the army leaders, and was not likely to be given any important part in the next chapter. This view explains the fact that General Castellano had come to me rather than Count Grandi, who had offered to fly to Madrid immediately after the *coup d'état*.

Mussolini, according to General Castellano, was mentally prostrate. He had been convinced up to the last minute that he would win the day in the meeting of the Grand Council and the majority against him had completely unnerved him.

This general discussion, apart from its immediate interest, enabled me to show the General my sympathy with his main objective and to persuade him to take my advice. After several hours of talk he left me, having promised to say nothing to any one in Madrid about his mission, and to go immediately to Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Ambassador in Lisbon.

The next chapter took place in Lisbon. There, the General met General Walter Smith, General Eisenhower's chief of staff, and, after protracted discussions, the terms of the armistice were read out and General Castellano agreed to take them at once to the Italian Comando Supremo in Sicily. It was further arranged that a code message on the Italian radio should, on August 28th and 29th, give the clue as to whether or not the armistice had been accepted by the Italian Government.

General Castellano in due course left Lisbon with his false passport and diplomatic colleagues. No code message, however, was given out on the Italian radio in accordance with the arrangement. Whilst we were wondering whether he had been arrested by the Germans on his return journey, General Carton de Wiart arrived in Portugal with an Italian general and authority to complete the negotiations. Marshal Badoglio had evidently thought that it was necessary in the interests of safety to double-bank General Castellano's mission and to send General Zanucci with General Carton de Wiart as a guarantee of his good faith, and a precaution against possible accidents.

General Carton de Wiart, whose life had already been an unbroken chapter of drama and adventure, suddenly found himself a free man entrusted with a sensational mission. He and other senior British officers had been prisoners of war in the Castello Vincigliata near Florence. Two days before his arrival in Lisbon, the commandant of the fortress had informed him that he was to leave the next day for Portugal with General Zanucci. When he expressed surprise and pointed to the fact that he had no civilian clothes for the journey, the commandant assured him

that everything would be arranged. The commandant was true to his word. A tailor immediately arrived to measure him for a civilian suit to be paid for by the Italian Government. The suit was ready by the next morning and immediately afterwards the two generals left for Lisbon.

As a matter of fact the precaution taken in sending this second mission to Portugal proved to be unnecessary, for almost simultaneously with the arrival of the two generals in Lisbon, General Castellano reached Sicily and the Armistice was accepted by Marshal Badoglio on September 3rd.

It was decided, for reasons that I could never fully understand, that the news was not to be announced until September 8th, the proposed date of the Allied landing on the mainland of Italy. This delay may have been inevitable for reasons with which I was not acquainted. Looking back, however, at the whole course of events, I cannot help feeling that the slow motion with which the picture was unfolded, gave the Germans the time for sending strong reinforcements to Italy and for organising the defence of the beaches and the mountains. It was on August 13th that the offer of an armistice was made to me and during the ensuing three weeks German resistance became daily more formidable and the Italian armies more completely demoralised. In saying this, I am stating a fact and not criticising the Allied leadership. An Italian surrender involved many difficult questions that intimately concerned the Allies, particularly the Greeks whose country had been so outrageously treated by the Italian army. It also raised the difficult question of what was meant by "unconditional surrender." There was a further complication. Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were in Quebec where they were engaged upon Allied discussions of unavoidable urgency. It was the cumulative effect of these factors that put a drag on the course of events. In public life it is a safe canon of conduct not to job back. In war it is perhaps even more necessary than ever to avoid regrets and recriminations over the past. The politician or the military leader who says to himself: "If this or that had happened, how different would have been the course of subsequent events" runs the risk of weakening his nerve for future decisions. On this account I will not draw the picture of what might have happened in the Italian campaign if we had found the Germans still staggering under the fall of Mussolini and the Italian army on the mainland comparatively intact and still an organised force.

CHAPTER TWENTY

WITHIN a few days of General Castellano's departure from Madrid I was due to see General Franco. The interview was likely to be the most important that I had yet had with him. Events had been moving swiftly since my last discussion with him, and our charge sheet against the Spanish Government was both long and formidable. The complaints that at the end of July I had set out in my Grand Remonstrance to the Minister of Foreign Affairs had been practically ignored. Many of them I had been repeating for months and years. Although Jordana had done his best to have them remedied, his efforts had always been frustrated by the Falange and the Germanophiles in the army and the Ministry of the Interior. In spite of our protests, Tangier and Melilla remained active centres of German espionage and sabotage. The German reporting stations still operated in the Straits, sabotage attempts against British shipping were frequently occurring, and the general attitude of the Spanish administration was one of indifference and not infrequently of definite hostility to our interests. By no stretch of the imagination could Spanish non-belligerency be regarded as genuine neutrality.

Overshadowing these actual grievances was the impressive change in the Allied fortunes of war that had followed the Torch successes. To any impartial observer an Allied defeat was now out of the question, and an Allied victory almost certain. In the governing circles of Spain there were, however, very few impartial observers. German influence, German money and German propaganda had biased and corrupted the minds of most of the leading members of the administration. Generals Franco and Vigon took their information from Admiral Canaris, the chief of the German military secret service, and the Falange Ministers were nothing more than Nazi officials. General Franco persisted in saying that the war would continue for years and end, if not in a German victory, at least in a stalemate and a peace of compromise. General Vigon went further and declared that the Russian army was a rabble, the African campaign a side show, and a final German victory still inevitable. The Falange Ministers, Arrese, the Minister of the Party, Giron, the Minister of Labour and Blas Pérez, the Minister of the Interior, showed their unshaken

belief in Nazi might by intensifying the persecution of Anglo-phils, Monarchists and Leftists.

It might have been thought that if our military victories had not impressed them, the collapse of Mussolini and Fascism would have given them pause. Any such expectation disclosed an ignorance of the men with whom I was dealing. To Franco Mussolini's fall was an encouragement rather than a *memento mori*. So complete was his complacency that he regarded it as evidence of his omniscient wisdom and as justification of his cautious policy in not entering the war too soon. The Falange Ministers had no need to think at all. As long as they could count on the police, the prisons and the censorship they had little to fear from events beyond the Spanish border.

The Germans were at this time particularly active. By hook or by crook they were bent upon retrieving their lost ground. Von Moltke, von Stohrer's successor, had suddenly died, and Dieckhoff, formerly of Washington and London, had succeeded him as Ambassador in Madrid. Behind Dieckhoff's fat face and set smile was an unscrupulous mind and a wide knowledge of all the Nazi methods of underhand cunning.

In the summer of 1943 the German plan of campaign was to convince Spaniards that the Allies were on the point of invading Spain and that the German army was ready to intervene to save the country from devastation. A variation of the theme was that the German army was about to enter Spain to forestall the Allied invasion. My reports went to show that there was more behind this propaganda than the usual war of nerves. Strange as it may seem in view of the commitments of the German army in Italy and Russia and the probability of an Allied invasion of the Channel coast, Hitler was undoubtedly thinking in the summer of 1943 of a lightning campaign through Spain for the purpose of immobilising Gibraltar and closing the Straits. He needed a victory for his declining prestige and the Spanish Peninsula seemed alone to offer him the field for a swift and successful campaign.

This then was the background of my interview with General Franco on August 20th—a long list of Spanish unneutral acts, a German war of nerves with the possibility of a German invasion behind it, an obstinate hostility on the part of the civil authorities to British interests, and an incredible complacency on the part of the Caudillo who regarded himself as divinely inspired and immune from the vicissitudes of ordinary mortals.

As usual, I took the greatest possible care with the preparation of my case. My habitual practice was to speak from notes, an accurate Spanish translation of which I always left with Franco at the end of the interview. I would during the talk hand him detailed memoranda on each of the subjects that I had raised, and attempt, not always with success, to draw him into a discussion that involved questions and answers, his natural inclination being to fall back on a carefully prepared monologue.

Upon this occasion my main subjects were the invincibility of the Allies, and the military strength of the British Commonwealth, particularly in the air, on the one hand, and on the other hand the obvious desire of the Spanish Government for an Axis victory, the bias of non-belligerency against British interests and the continued participation of the Blue Division on the Eastern front.

Although it would have been more convenient both for him and for me to have had the interview before he left Madrid for Galicia, I was determined for two reasons to postpone it until the eve of my departure for England. I felt that my words would carry the greater weight with him, if the Sicilian campaign were finished, and I spoke to him within a few days of my leaving for London. It was on this account that I had to travel four hundred miles each way between Madrid and Corunna during a heat wave that had been unprecedented in Madrid for fifty years. The weather was so overpoweringly hot that I had seriously to consider whether the journey was practicable. The heat, two ranges of high mountains and no wireless made it dangerous in the opinion of the air authorities for me to fly in the Air Attaché's Vega Gull, whilst the trains were interminably slow and inconvenient. Brigadier Torr, however, put these difficulties to the Minister for Foreign Affairs at San Sebastian, with the result that General Vigon offered me one of the Douglas passenger planes that normally flew between Madrid and Lisbon. In addition to an excellent plane I was also given a star crew in the shape of the best pilot, mechanic and radio operator in the Iberia service.

My destination was Guitiriz, a sulphur spa between Lugo and Corunna, where there was a landing ground and a hydro in which I could stay for the night. When I arrived, after an uneventful flight, I found waiting the British Consul from Corunna, and the various Spanish local authorities. The Civil Governor of Corunna had sent me his car with two uniformed civil guards and had arranged for rooms at the hydro for the party consisting

of the assistant air attaché, one of the Embassy secretaries, the aircraft crew and myself. Typical of the climate of Galicia, the weather was cold and wet in strange contrast to the torrid heat of Castile. The hydro, or *balneario* as it is called in Spain, was a gaunt barrack of great size, reeking of sulphur and filled with crowds of yellow-complexioned patients doing the cure. My visit, projected from the air into the monotonous life of the spa, created general excitement. Crowds gathered around the aeroplane, and a strong guard had to be posted round it for the purpose of preventing its instruments and tyres being looted. In the *balneario* the manager was so anxious to give me an imposing reception that he had instructed the several hundred guests to stand up and bow when I left the restaurant. I may say that at the last moment I was able to prevent this embarrassing demonstration.

My interview with the Generalissimo was arranged for six. The distance between Guitiriz and his villa was about 60 kilometres along a steep and winding road and over a country of moorland, interspersed with peasant holdings.

The Generalissimo's villa was some miles outside Corunna. I was interested to see the Berchtesgaden of the Spanish dictator. Its recent history had already been explained to me. The intention was to make the gift of a summer villa in Galicia to the Gallego hero in token of his services to Spain. Accordingly, the owner of the best house in the neighbourhood was expropriated, and a public collection started to provide the payment of the high price that was asked for the purchase. This arrangement seemed excellent on paper, and the villa was duly presented to the Caudillo. What, however, was lacking was the public subscription. The thrifty Gallegos failed to send in their donations, with the result that the local bank was still owed the money that it had advanced for the transaction. This very Spanish contretemps had not, however, made any difference to the visits of the Franco family, or to the house and garden, which seemed to be maintained on a standard altogether superior to the haphazard habits of Spain. The house, evidently in origin a small fortified castle, gave me the impression of a rich and comfortable shooting lodge. It was situated on a wooded slope, and approached by a drive bordered on each side by blue hydrangeas. It did not appear to be heavily guarded, although I imagine there were numbers of troops and police out of sight. I was met at the door by General Muñoz-Grandes, the Chief of the Military Household, Baron de

las Torres, the chief of the Protocol, and two or three other military and civil officers. Although I was a quarter of an hour before my time, I was at once taken upstairs to General Franco's sitting-room where he, Jordana, Baron de la Torres and I sat in conversation for more than two hours. The room was well furnished—a mixture of walnut panelling, and carpets and tapestries from the national factory. Franco, who sat upon a comfortable sofa, evidently intended that we should have a general gossip in the atmosphere of a pleasant Sunday afternoon. The air in fact seemed so overwhelmingly peaceful that I began to wonder whether I should ever be able to penetrate the heavy mist of self-complacency that protected the Caudillo. In my struggle against it I went to the utmost limit of frank speech.

The main points of my talk, the Falange, non-belligerency and the Blue Division, touched the three most sensitive points in the Franco armour.

Apart from these three main subjects, there was a good deal of general discussion that threw light upon the Caudillo's attitude towards the war. More than once, for instance, he displayed his detestation of the Japanese as the violators of the Philippines, the most historic centre of Spanish civilisation in the Pacific. More than once, also, he expressed his fear of a defeated Germany throwing itself into the arms of a victorious Russia. It seemed that he had put aside the idea of a separate peace between Germany and Russia, and that he now feared a German collapse in which Germany would slip into dependence upon the Soviet. It was interesting also to note that when he spoke of Spanish questions he insisted that the Falange was not an administration but a movement. This observation seemed to show that he had it in his mind to push the Falange out of the administration and to leave it as a social organisation.

So much for what he said. What he did not say, was perhaps equally significant. He no longer spoke with the old assurance of the German military machine. The best that he could say of it was that it still possessed vast military stocks and that our air raids had done it little harm. Nor did he react to my remarks upon the fall of Mussolini and Fascism. When I had visited him in the Pardo, I had found him surrounded with photographs of Mussolini and Hitler and on evidently the best possible terms with Mussolini. Now he seemed indifferent to his old friend and to the disruption of a system that had so much in common with Falangism. Indeed, his complacency was almost overpowering.

Here was the dictator of Spain, four hundred miles from his capital at a moment of European crisis, sitting in a comfortable smoking-room, as ready to discuss the crops and the weather or the prospects of the shooting season in the same breath as the tremendous events taking place in the world, and all the time, self-possessed, complacent and seemingly confident of his own future. My strong words, so far from setting off explosions, fizzled out in cotton wool. Was it, I asked myself, worth protesting at all? Whilst my words seemed to have little effect upon this small, quiet, fat Gallego, I remembered how his whole career had been a series of unexpected successes over both his friends and enemies. Self-complacency alone could not have carried him safely over the fall of the monarchy and the early days of the Republic. It could not have manœuvred him during the Civil War into the position of the Nationalist leader at a time when there were other generals with far better claims than his own. Still less could it have kept him in power during the four years of this war. If this chain of successes was to be explained, there must be other factors that did not always strike the eye. I could at least suggest two of them. There was, first of all, his Gallego cunning, the cunning that has sent many penniless peasants from Galicia to South America and brought them back rich men to their native Spain. There was secondly, the weakness of his rivals. Whether they were of the right or the left, they were divided amongst themselves and jealous of each other. Would these two factors, I asked myself, enable him to cling to power and escape the effects of the universal unpopularity that his régime had created? I could not venture to give an answer to these questions. I could only feel after more than three years' study of Spanish problems that the answer was very open.

Immediately after this disconcerting interview I flew back to Madrid to make my preparations for my annual visit to London. It had been intended on our side to give no particular publicity to my interview. The Spanish Embassy in Washington, however, issued a statement that the talk had been friendly and satisfactory, and implied that relations were excellent between Spain and Great Britain. This perversion of the truth necessitated a rejoinder from London. The Foreign Secretary therefore stated explicitly in the House of Commons the subjects about which I had complained, and a communiqué to the press made it clear that we were gravely dissatisfied with the unneutral behaviour of the Spanish Government.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

SHORTLY before I left for England I received one piece of good news. Our uphill and long-drawn battle on behalf of British interests had at least obtained one victory.

It is worth setting out the details at length, for they vividly illustrate the difficulties and prejudices that obstructed the work of the mission. Totalitarian injustice, Falange hostility and Spanish indifference to personal ill-treatment are each conspicuous in the following case of the persecution of a respectable British subject.

Mr. Edwin Apfel came to Spain as manager of the Alcoy and Ganda Harbour and Railway Company and lived at Ganda, a very turbulent zone during the Civil War. Ganda is close to Valencia that was at one time the centre of the republican Government. During this troubled period Mr. Apfel assisted in the escape of no less than 18,000 Spaniards, amongst whom were not a few adherents of General Franco who were escaping from the anarchist terror that raged on the Levant coast. Mr. Apfel seems to have kept clear of politics, and to have devoted himself to the humane task of saving the lives of men, women and children, irrespective of their political views. When, however, the Nationalists occupied the Province of Valencia, they ignored his efforts for their own adherents, and remembered only the assistance that he had given to their enemies. To make matters worse for him, his business rivals seized upon the chance of eliminating him and his British interests. A relentless offensive was therefore launched against him. When I arrived in Spain in 1940, one of my first tasks was to protest against an order of immediate expulsion that had been served upon him. After repeated interviews first with Beigbeder and subsequently with Serrano Suñer, I succeeded in having the order suspended.

I fondly hoped that the false charges had been exploded and that the case was settled. Far from it. The Falangistas were not prepared to sit down under this initial defeat. Their next campaign was even more vindictive and unscrupulous than any of their previous attacks. As a result of their machinations Mr. Apfel was arrested and thrown into prison without trial upon the charge of having engaged in Marxist propaganda during the Civil War. This was a very serious accusation in Falange Spain, for it carried with it the penalty of death. For months

on end my staff and I protested. But all that we eventually succeeded in achieving was to bring the case to trial after Mr. Apfel had already been imprisoned for a year.

The charge, being within the scope of martial law, was under the direction of a military tribunal. From start to finish, there was no vestige of any attempt at judicial treatment. No witnesses were produced. Not a single question was put to Mr. Apfel during the court proceedings. The prosecution relied upon the gossip of an unnamed boy who was said to have declared to some equally unknown person that Mr. Apfel was a communist, and upon a French book of leftist tendencies and a piece of red stuff supposed to be a red flag that were discovered in his flat. His counsel was removed the day before the trial and there was, therefore, no time to instruct a new counsel in the details of the case. The Public Prosecutor demanded a sentence of thirty years' imprisonment. This mockery of a trial was carefully advertised and staged for political effect. Falangistas were present in large numbers to support the prosecution, and no one, not even Mr. Apfel's Valencia and Gandia friends whose lives he had saved, dared to say a word in his defence. After a short sitting, the Court adjourned for luncheon and at its afternoon session condemned him to six years and one day's imprisonment.

I at once protested with all the power at my command against this gross act of injustice. The result was a series of interviews between me and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, between my diplomatic staff and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and between Brigadier Torr and the officials of the Ministry of War. Count Albiz, the Embassy lawyer, who had been most helpful throughout the long-drawn out affair, advised a petition for a pardon. Accordingly, Mr. Apfel made a representation in the approved form to General Franco. This action seemed to have some effect upon the Ministry of War, the department responsible for the case and the sentence. General Varela, the Minister, took a personal interest in my representations, and eventually gave Brigadier Torr to understand that a pardon would be forthcoming. Unfortunately, within a few days of this assurance, General Varela left the War Office as a result of the bomb outrage at Begona. The case then, true to Spanish practice, went back to the starting point, and Brigadier Torr and I had to begin all over again with a new Minister of War, General Asensio, a man of reactionary outlook and germanophil sentiments.

For another year, we had to continue the battle. The Ministry of War, under its new dispensation, was unwilling to admit the iniquities of the Military Court, whilst the Captain General and the Civil Governor of Valencia had staked their credit upon maintaining the sentence. The local Falange that had staged the trial was not lightly to be set aside, and the vested interests bent upon expropriating Mr. Apfel and his Company had no intention of relinquishing their prey. The front, however, began to break in the early months of 1943, when the Duke of Alba in London made on behalf of the Spanish Government a proposal to exchange Mr. Apfel for a Spanish spy, who was then imprisoned in England. The British Government immediately turned down the proposal on the ground that there was no similarity between the case of an innocent man who had been unjustly condemned and of a spy who had admitted his guilt. The battle had, therefore, to continue for some months more. Eventually on the 8th June, two years after Mr. Apfel had been first imprisoned and a year after his actual sentence, the Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me that General Franco had signed a pardon.

I at once sent the good news to our Consul at Valencia, who throughout this long period had been indefatigable in his efforts to help his unfortunate fellow countryman. Some days afterwards Mr. Apfel was released on the understanding that he immediately left Spain, an altogether unjust condition that in the circumstances he thought it wisest to accept. If he had remained in Spain, the vendetta against him would undoubtedly have been revived in some cunning and ruthless fashion.

So ended the three year battle. It was one of many that we had to fight in defence of British interests. To win it the following operations were undertaken—sixteen separate visits by me to the three Foreign Ministers, Beigbeder, Serrano Suñer and Jordana; four visits by the British Minister and the First Secretary to the Chief of the European department of the Ministry, twelve by the military and assistant military attachés to the Minister and Ministry of War, and seventeen official notes and *aides-mémoire*. Without this continuous offensive Mr. Apfel would undoubtedly have remained in prison for the six years of his sentence.

Lord Haldane was certainly right when he told me in the early days of my work at the Air Ministry that patience was the most essential quality for a public man.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE YEAR that was ending had brought to a climax one of the Embassy's most difficult activities. Escaped prisoners of war, refugees of many countries, crashed airmen and stranded submarine sailors are not normally the concern of a diplomatic mission. In Madrid, their affairs occupied more of our time and thought than any other single question.

It might have been expected that this body of work would have been in the hands of the Red Cross, the various relief organisations and the Allied governments whose nationals escaped into Spain. The peculiar conditions under which we were working made any such normal arrangements impossible. The work of relief and evacuation was so inextricably connected with the Spanish military and civil machine, and indeed with the high politics of our battle with the Germans, that it was necessary to keep it within the British Embassy. At every stage it called for active intervention from myself and my staff. As the side of it connected with prisoners of war came under the Spanish War Office, Brigadier Torr, the military attaché, and his staff, were responsible for our main activities. The Spanish Government looked suspiciously at any international organisation such as the Red Cross and until the American Embassy took over their own military and civil prisoners, we alone of the Allied governments had an organisation capable of dealing with the many problems created by the arrival of thousands of men and women of all descriptions in a country dominated by the Gestapo.

Our work was very heavy. We had to graft upon a diplomatic mission an improvised organisation that operated in a country that stretched nearly a thousand miles from north to south, and lacked every kind of regular communication. Food in Spain was almost unprocurable and it was therefore necessary to bring it by road from Gibraltar that was 500 miles to the south of Madrid, and Lisbon that was 500 miles to the west and subsequently to transport it another 300 miles to the north where most of the refugees were interned. Step by step, and not always without many checks and formidable difficulties, we created the necessary service with lorries that we either obtained from Gibraltar or were lent by the American Embassy.

For the actual relief, I formed under the chairmanship of Brigadier Torr a committee that represented the principal British workers and organisations, official and unofficial. Behind the committee there worked in Madrid and in several of the provincial centres a devoted body of British ladies with Lady Templewood as their president. The amount of clothes that they produced would astonish a world that seems now to be resigned to the paucity and rigidity of British coupons. Simultaneously, the British communities gave large sums of money for comforts of all kinds, the Allied War Charities Committee alone collecting more than £7000.

Although we were only directly responsible for British subjects, our work was inevitably extended to cover refugees of all kinds. Every one of our Allies came to us for help. Russian soldiers, for instance, who had escaped from prison camps in Germany found their way across the Pyrenees and came under our wing. Dutch, Belgians, Jugo-Slavs, Greeks, Poles and Czechs all drifted into Spain and, as their governments were not recognised by the Spanish Government, our organisation had to make provision for them. The stream of French refugees became a veritable flood when the Germans occupied Vichy France. There again, as the Spanish Government only recognised the Vichy régime, it was we who had to undertake relief and evacuation until the responsibility was eventually transferred to a representative of the Algiers Government and the American Embassy.

Our efforts did not, however, end with the Allies. Thousands of anti-Nazi Germans and Austrians, particularly Jews, arrived with no accepted nationality. Hitler had deprived them of their citizenship, and they drifted, a guideless flotsam and jetsam, into the Spanish vortex.

Whilst we did our utmost for all these sorts and conditions of suffering humanity, our primary responsibility was for our own prisoners of war. For them it was necessary to keep open and no less to keep secret, the lines that brought them through France and the Pyrenees, to obtain news of them when they arrived in Spain and to arrange for their eventual release and evacuation.

As I have noted in an earlier chapter, British service personnel began to reach Spain within a few weeks of my arrival in Madrid in 1940. They were for the most part men who had been taken prisoner at Dunkirk and St. Valéry. A steady trickle subsequently continued, until it developed into a definite spurt after the failure

of the Dieppe raid. The spurt became a flood when the Germans occupied the whole of France. The result was that at the beginning of 1943 our escape and relief machine was strained almost to breaking point.

Unexpected demands were constantly thrust upon us. Our own service personnel came from every part of the Commonwealth and Empire. More than once, for instance, we were called upon for a member of the staff who could talk Urdu to escaped prisoners of the Indian army. For the European languages we were well prepared, particularly the Slav for which the Russian wife of the First Secretary was always at hand. We had inevitably to depend on ourselves. To have gone outside the Embassy for help would have compromised our secret lines.

During the whole of this period, we carried on an unending battle with the Gestapo and the two Spanish departments, the Ministry of War and the Ministry of the Interior, in which German influence was paramount.

The procedure was usually long and troublesome. It was first necessary to establish our case under international law. We claimed that under the Hague Convention of 1907 we were entitled to obtain the immediate release of all escaped prisoners of war. Unfortunately Article 13, like several other articles of the Convention, is by no means explicit. It runs as follows:

“La Puissance neutre qui reçoit des prisonniers de guerre évadés les laissera en liberté. Si elle tolère leur séjour sur son territoire, elle peut leur assigner une résidence.”

The Spanish obstructionists claimed that under this provision it was first necessary to prove that a man was an escaped prisoner of war, and secondly that even if this were proved, the neutral government was not bound to evacuate prisoners of war from its territory. These arguments led to interminable delays in the early days of my mission. Eventually, however, we were able to establish the case, and though it often took many weeks to obtain the necessary permits, we invariably succeeded in getting all our own personnel out of Spain. When I say “all our own personnel” I do not mean only the escaped prisoners who could indisputably prove that they were born or naturalised in British territory. We gave a very generous interpretation to the definition of British subject and any escaped prisoner of war who was accepted by the Spanish Government as a British subject was so treated by us for

the purposes of relief and evacuation. The number of prisoners with exotic names and with no knowledge of the English language who claimed to be French Canadians was indeed phenomenal.

What usually happened was that an escaped prisoner of war reached the Spanish frontier by our secret lines through France. Incredible as it may seem in view of the German occupation, these lines remained open with scarcely a day's break during the whole period of my mission. From time to time treachery or torture would expose our agents. In one black week no less than four of the chief agents were seized by the Gestapo. None the less, such were the courage and ingenuity of the men and women of the Resistance that as soon as one leader fell, another came forward and a new plan would take the place of the methods that had been compromised. The French women, in particular, played a heroic part in this underground battle. One of them, young and attractive, brought scores of British prisoners across the Pyrenees. In her last journey, she and they only escaped after she had killed an agent of the Gestapo with a wine bottle. An ominous silence then closed down upon her work. After some weeks without news we heard that she had been betrayed and taken to Germany. We could obtain no further news of her.

When I asked how it was humanly possible to carry on this work year after year under the Nazi terror and in the presence of a German garrison, I was given some very interesting answers. Perhaps the most surprising was that certain of the local officers in the Gestapo were secretly opposed to the terror and although for security's sake they clung to their posts, were only half-hearted in carrying out their work. This explanation, given me by a Frenchman who was actively engaged in the underground war, was supported by the fact that the acts of terror were mainly carried out by unknown officials who were specially sent to Bordeaux from Germany for a few days or weeks and who then vanished without any possibility of being identified.

The second reason was obvious to any one who had a knowledge of intelligence work. There were too many German spy organisations, and each of them was so jealous of the others that it adopted a policy of secretive isolation. The same French agent told me of several escapes that had been due to the want of liaison between the various German services.

There was a third reason and in this case a reason inherent in the Nazi régime. Brutality breeds stupidity. The Gestapo, relying upon torture as its method of extracting information,

did not trouble about brains. The French relied on their brains and the Frenchwomen, in particular, upon their unique ingenuity. The French brains beat the German brutes, and the steady stream of our escaped prisoners was never held up for more than a few days.

These contacts impressed me with the contrast between the actual facts of this side of the Resistance movement and the theories that were invented by either ignorant people who were living in the safety of a free country, or interested politicians who wished to divide the world between the very white sheep and the very black goats. It was clear to me that no hard and fast line could be drawn between collaboration and non-collaboration. In South-western France, the part of the country with which I was concerned, almost every one was forced to have some dealings with the army of occupation. Wherever it was possible, men and women went on with their work even though the fact of their working would indirectly benefit the Germans. The two most conspicuous instances were the railwaymen and the local police. The ideologist would point to them and say, "Collaborationists. These men are working for the accursed government of Vichy." He did not realise that if these men had not remained at their posts, our efforts to pass escaped prisoners through France would have been immeasurably more difficult. The railwaymen and the local police, a force altogether distinct from Darlan's *milice*, gave us invaluable help. The railwaymen in particular were with us almost to a man.

The only true test of collaboration was a man's intentions. Did he wish the Germans to be defeated? Was he prepared to help and not hinder an Allied victory, even though he might have little or no opportunity to give active effect to his wish?

When a prisoner reached the Pyrenees he was not without friends. The national industry of smuggling would often draw him into its toils. The *contrabandistas* were as ready to pass him across the frontier as any other profitable merchandise. A convention grew up in course of time to count an escaped prisoner the equivalent of a grand piano for the purpose of the tariff. This meant a charge of about £30 a head.

When the prisoner descended from the mountain passes, he was either arrested by the frontier guards or he found his way secretly to a British Consulate or the Embassy in Madrid. If he was arrested, he was probably thrown into a Spanish prison and accused of illegally crossing the frontier without papers. In

the early days of my mission, it was possible for a man to remain in prison for many days without my hearing anything about the case. Prisoners at that time were very badly treated. Their heads were shaved, they were moved about in gangs, tied together by ropes and thrown into cold and filthy cells with common criminals. It was no excuse for the Spanish Government to maintain that these were the ordinary conditions in a Spanish prison. I insisted upon the principles of the Hague Convention and, after many protracted arguments and vigorous threats, I at last obtained an arrangement under which officers were interned in certain hotels and the men sent to the camp at Miranda del Ebro. Even so, cases of bad treatment occasionally occurred and the closest watch was always necessary upon the local police and prison governors.

Throughout their many trials, the British prisoners maintained a magnificent morale. I could quote many instances of the fine example of dignity and courage that they gave to Spaniards and Allies alike. One of these instances I remember in particular. It concerned Commander Redvers Prior who, after a gallant career in the Navy in both world wars, subsequently became a member of the House of Commons. Commander Prior was the last British officer to be taken on the beaches of Dieppe. After escaping from the Germans he was caught by the French and imprisoned in the most brutal conditions by the Vichy police. He again escaped and after crossing the Pyrenees on foot, was arrested by the Spanish frontier guards. He was then taken with other British prisoners to Gerona and thrown into a cell crowded with Spanish prisoners, some of whom were common criminals and others political prisoners who had been condemned to savage sentences of thirty years. When the prison governor attempted to break up the party of British prisoners and to imprison them in different cells, he refused to accept the order and declared that they all intended to remain together. So obstinate was he and so vigorous were the arguments that he hurled at the governor's head that he had his way and the British prisoners were given a cell to themselves. As soon as I heard that he and his companions were at Gerona, I vigorously protested against the behaviour of the Spanish authorities and eventually obtained the release of the party, not, however, before I had myself been to Barcelona and with the help of the very active Consul General, Mr. Harold Farquhar, fought the question out on the spot.

Other escaped prisoners were often more fortunate. After

evading the Spanish police, they would probably arrive at the British Embassy where, once upon British territory, they were immune from arrest. So many of these welcome visitors appeared that we found it necessary to build an annexe in the Embassy garden. Until the Germans left France, the building was never empty, and many were the thrilling stories of hairbreadth escapes that were told me by its inmates. One of them, a Pole, who for the purposes of his escape claimed to be a British subject, had made eight separate escapes from German prison camps. Another, a Royal Marine, had walked across the Pyrenees with a wooden leg. A third, a British pilot, was twice through Madrid in the course of a few months. Having twice been captured after forced landings in France, he had twice reached us in Spain. Several pilots and airmen who were housed in our annexe within a few weeks of their machines crashing in France were able to give us most valuable information about the success of our air raids. One of the last of our army visitors in Madrid was Brigadier James Hargest, the gallant soldier and Member of Parliament from New Zealand who had escaped from the internment camp of Castello Vincigliata near Florence and reached us via Switzerland. His brother officer, a fellow New Zealander, General Miles, had preceded him across the frontier but, in a fit of collapse due to mental strain and physical exhaustion, tragically took his own life at the very moment when he had reached safety.

Miranda del Ebro, to which were sent the prisoners who had been arrested by the Spanish police, is a small town in the extreme north of Castile. Very hot in summer and very cold in winter, its climate is as rigorous as any in Spain. The camp, which had been started during the Civil War, was intended to accommodate about 700 occupants. At the end of 1942 and in the early weeks of 1943 when the flood of refugees arrived from France, the numbers rose to more than 3000. The accommodation was neither better nor worse than the ordinary accommodation for Spanish troops. When I complained of its many inadequacies, for instance the lack of an adequate water supply, I was told that if the improvements that I demanded were permitted, there would be a mutiny in every Spanish barracks, as the Miranda standard would then so far exceed the normal conditions of Spanish barrack life.

Conditions in the camp depended to a great extent upon the commandant. The post was often changed and with the change of personnel there was usually a change of treatment for the

better or worse. For instance, whilst regular visits were normally permitted to the military attaché's staff, there were times when all access to the camp was prohibited and even our lorries with clothes and food were prevented from unloading their urgently required stocks of relief. This type of obstruction was due either to direct German pressure or the anti-British feelings of the commandant. The Germans, it is hardly necessary to add, were always free to visit the camp and to cross-question and threaten the internees.

The camp itself was a veritable Noah's Ark of every species of refugee. Although it was originally opened for escaped prisoners of war, it very soon received inmates of all kinds, including the remnant of the International Brigade that had fought against the Nationalist forces in the Civil War. This confusion of categories and nationalities created many difficult problems of relief for the Embassy. It also provided a potential recruiting ground for German agents. More than one of the dangerous spies who were subsequently brought to Allied justice, had passed from Central Europe through Miranda into Allied territory.

When once our men were in the camp, our system of organised relief began to operate. At one time the food, clothes and transport were costing us more than £1000 a day. Towards this heavy liability the British Red Cross made generous contributions, whilst the committee of the British and Allied War Charities in Spain and the British communities in Portugal were unstinting with their gifts. No expenditure could have been more necessary. The food and clothes enabled us to sustain the morale of the men and to keep them as contented as was possible until we could settle the details of their evacuation. I will not say that there were not many almost intolerable delays in the process of their liberation. Whilst the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was genuinely anxious to expedite it, the Ministries of War and the Interior, instigated no doubt by the Germans, were determined to delay and if possible to prevent it.

Twice during my mission the Germans were within an inch of winning the day. Once, as I have already described, in 1940, when the Spanish Government was on the point of yielding to the German demand that all escaped prisoners should be thrown back across the Pyrenees. And once again, in the spring of 1943, when a party of Czech prisoners were actually handed over to the Gestapo, and an order given by the Ministries of War and the

Interior to close the frontier against all refugees and to expel any who penetrated the cordon. At both these moments my relations with the Spanish Government reached a point of extreme crisis, and at both these moments also, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the first case Beigbeder, and in the second case Jordana, sided with me and the order was rescinded.

Whilst the work connected with these questions was always heavy and often irritating, no one on my staff, least of all the military attaché, upon whom fell the main burden, grudged any part of it. Apart from its value to our war effort, it was abundantly worth while for the human contacts that it gave us and the real gratitude that it excited amongst those whom we were able to help.

Here is a typical tribute from a party of Esthonian sailors who whilst in Miranda made a mat of many colours for Lady Templewood and myself:

"To H. Br. Majesty's Ambassador.

Miranda de Ebro,
27.I.42.

"HON SIR:

"Begging your pardon, that we 7 Estonians, are taking the liberty of bothering you again.

"Would you please be so kind, as to accept this little enclosed present as our gift to you, which is very insignificant compared to the good deed you have done to us: by helping us out morally and materially.

"We do hope, that this little thing will help to give some more colour to your office and will memorize the Estonians; who thanks to you—are living again as human beings after almost of 4 years of hardship; prisoners of war and seamen of Merchant Marine.

"And all of us that are hoping that: when the day off our liberty does arrive once—to be able to join the ranks of fighters against the fashismus as beside the political views we are sore at them for their mistreatment as well.

"Please do forgive us and accept our best thanks."

Here follow the signatures of the seven seamen.

A second letter that I quote shows that our work was warmly appreciated in the Dominions. It came from Mr. Eden who transmitted to me a message from the Dominion of Canada:

"Foreign Office, S.W.1.

23rd April, 1943.

"I have had a letter from Vincent Massey to say that the Reverend Friar F. Ouellet recently called at the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa. Friar Ouellet is a Canadian citizen who was released from a concentration camp in Spain through the efforts of His Majesty's Embassy.

"Massey tells me that Friar Ouellet gave a glowing account of the kindness which he received from His Majesty's Consul in Barcelona and from members of the Embassy staff, who supplied him with money and food during the time he was in a concentration camp and after his release. He said that all the British officials with whom he had come in contact in Spain and in Gibraltar had spared no effort to help him in every way possible and that he was most grateful for their assistance.

"Massey adds that this is only one of several reports which the Canadian authorities have received of the kindness of His Majesty's Embassy and British officials in Spain to Canadians in difficulty there. From the many reports which have been received it is clear that the assistance given has far exceeded the normal help which a government might be expected to give to its subjects in difficulty. The kindness of our officials has made a very deep impression on the many Canadians who have come from Spain.

"The Canadian Prime Minister, in cabling this information to the High Commissioner, asked that a warm expression of the appreciation of the Canadian Government should be transmitted to you and to your staff for the help which you have given to Canadians in Spain. I have great pleasure in passing on to you this striking tribute which I know is well deserved.

ANTHONY EDEN."

Although no thanks were needed for work that we considered a privilege to perform, it was most encouraging to feel that it was widely appreciated. It was also satisfactory to hear that many of the men whom we passed through Spain were urgently needed for important war work. The hundreds of airmen, pilots and mechanics, for instance, meant a substantial reinforcement to Allied air power and particularly to the small air forces of our European allies. The exiled governments of Poland, Holland,

I was able to give the refugees some help. The Spanish Government treated them abominably. They were stopped at the Spanish frontier, and were equally refused readmission into France. The result was that they were left for hours in the no-man's land between the two frontiers. After treatment of this kind they had every justification for making their escape from Spain.

Of King Carol's arrival I heard much, although it did not directly concern me. Serrano Suñer, after promising him a safe refuge, had him interned in Seville where he and Madame Lupescu were left in close confinement. The unfortunate King constantly appealed to me for help, particularly when it seemed certain that the Spanish Government was intending to hand him over to the Germans. I could do little. Indeed, in view of King Carol's past, I had good reason to ignore his appeal. But he was the son of an English Princess, and apart from this fact, he was escaping from the Gestapo. These reasons were sufficient for me to protest against the inhumanity and treachery of the Spanish Government in keeping him prisoner. I was delighted when he escaped into Portugal.

Another of these well-known travellers who arrived in Spain was the aged Paderewski. The tragic fate of his country had left its indelible mark upon his picturesque figure. The brilliant artist whose genius had made the world remember Poland had become a ghost. His days were clearly numbered, and it was without surprise that I soon heard of his death in the United States.

I must not, however, be drawn into further details about the prisoners and captives who crossed the Pyrenees. Their stories would fill a volume.

Let me therefore end this chapter with the grand total of those whom we helped. Between 1940 and the end of 1944 the figure was more than 30,000.

It was well worth going to Madrid even if this result had been the only outcome of my mission.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE AUTUMN of 1943 witnessed the beginning of the last acute crisis that I had to face with the Spanish Government. Before, however, I describe it, I must gather together a mixed bag of various incidents and impressions that gave a particular interest to the later months of the year.

First, there was my annual visit to England. My stay followed its usual course of countless interviews and discussions. A new question had arisen that closely affected Spain. The menacing developments of the submarine campaign had made it necessary for us to have air bases in the Azores. Any question that concerned the Portuguese islands was of considerable interest to Spain. The essence of the Spanish-Portuguese agreement, first negotiated by Beigbeder and subsequently confirmed by Franco and Jordana, was the integrity of Iberian territory. German propaganda had been continuously focused on our alleged intentions to occupy the Spanish Canaries. An Allied entry into the Azores, therefore, might well provide dangerous fuel for a pro-German campaign and stir into flame the latent embers of Spanish nationalism. This being so, it was agreed that I should be ready to give Jordana definite assurances as to our intentions at the moment of our arrival in the islands.

Apart from this specific question there was the eternal problem of our general relations with the Franco Government. Franco's obvious sympathies with the Axis and the impervious complacency with which he behaved towards the Allies were daily becoming more difficult to endure. When, however, the advantages and drawbacks of a drastic change of policy were considered, it was still thought wise to avoid a crisis in the Spanish peninsula. Spanish exports were needed for our increasingly heavy war demands, the preparations for our landing on the continent were beginning to take shape, and no soldier, minister or civil official wanted any diversion of effort from our main objective. Reluctantly, therefore, we were convinced that although Allied successes could and would strengthen our hands, patience was still needed in our dealings with the Spanish Government. The Germans were still on the Spanish frontier, and every available Anglo-American

division would soon be needed for the grand climacteric already confidentially known as "Overlord."

I found the world of London very tired. Returning at twelve months' interval I could note the changes in my friends and colleagues. The strain had inevitably left its mark on them. Whilst they were showing evidence of a very natural weariness, the machine of government was almost daily becoming larger and more intricate. As the war had become total, so the multiplication of departments and officials had developed into a colossal bureaucracy. The combination of physical weariness and administrative complexity was everywhere slowing down the revolutions of the machine. Decisions needed longer time, illness took a larger toll amongst the staffs of government offices, questions needed to be followed round from one end of Whitehall to the other before they could be answered. These changes did not surprise, still less depress me. Human nature could not withstand the ceaseless pressure of work, worry and air raids. The only wonder to me was that my friends in the Foreign Office whose numbers always seemed to be altogether insufficient for their ceaselessly heavy duties, carried on with such ability, courage and persistence.

When I returned to Madrid, I described in a speech to the diplomatic corps the impressions that my London visit had left with me. They were of a city, battered, weary but determined. I remember adding that London was very shabby, and that only great cities, like great people and unlike the *demi-monde*, could afford to be shabby.

Madrid was in its usual state of nerves. It mattered not whether the war went well or badly for us. The talk of the capital was always of an impending calamity. If it was a time of Allied defeats, it would be of a German invasion to close the Mediterranean and end the war. If on the other hand the Germans were suffering reverses, it would be of a German invasion to make a military diversion and restore Hitler's prestige.

German intrigue, in and out of the Spanish Government, found a fertile ground for its operations in this hysterical world. The result was a continuance of anti-Allied incidents. The British Vice-Consulate at Saragossa was attacked by young Falange gunmen who were undoubtedly in league with the civil authorities. A few days later, a similar outrage was committed on the American Consulate at Valencia.

As a further example of German machinations, a telegram of

good wishes was sent by the Spanish Government to Laurel, the Quisling President of the Philippines. Jordana's approval of this inept and unfriendly act had been obtained by the most notorious of the germanophils in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the ground that it was only an expression of conventional courtesy. The Minister's simplicity of mind and lack of experience had prevented his seeing the significance behind the message. The incident rightly created a veritable uproar in the United States. Indeed, its reverberations never entirely ceased. For months to come it affected the attitude of the State Department to Spanish questions and stirred into a blaze the dangerous fires of Spanish controversy.

The first task on my return was to reassure Jordana on the subject of the Allied landings in the Azores. When I passed through Lisbon, there was already an atmosphere of general excitement. The crowds that filled the streets were gazing into the air, the more optimistic, to observe a daylight display of the planet Venus, the more nervous, to see the impending attack of the Luftwaffe.

When I reached Madrid, the current story was of a British landing in the Tagus. Every one seemed to believe it. So responsible a person as the American Ambassador had on October 7th asked Arthur Yencken, the British Chargé d'Affaires, whether the landing had not actually taken place. In the meanwhile, Jordana had left for the Portuguese frontier on the pretext of shooting partridges, but in reality to receive from Dr. Salazar advance information of the Azores agreement. I arrived in Madrid on the 10th and arranged to see the Minister on the 12th, the morning of the landing.

His reception of my message could not have been more satisfactory. The German Ambassador, who was waiting to see the Minister when I left him, came away discomfited, although, as Franco afterwards described it to my Portuguese colleague, his behaviour had been *muy bruto*. And well it might. For scarcely less important than the Allied landing was the fact that once again the German intelligence organisations had failed to forestall a great event. The innumerable German agents had indeed reported that October 12th was to be the day of an important move on the Allied side, but they had declared that it was to be a Portuguese declaration of war on Japan and not an Anglo-American landing in the Azores. Gullibility was the persistent characteristic of the German secret service. Time after

time its agents greedily devoured the misleading reports that we spread for their edification.

Within a few days of my interview with Jordana we were off to Barcelona for the first exchange of *grand-blessés* to be made since the war started.

An equal number of British and German wounded, about 2000 British from Germany and a similar number of Germans from Africa were to arrive simultaneously in four ships, and the exchange was to take place under the ægis of the Swiss Red Cross. The German Embassy, true to type, determined to turn the occasion into a Nazi demonstration. The Ambassador, accompanied by an army of uniformed officials, military and civil, including even the Agricultural Attaché, journeyed to Barcelona where they monopolised the Ritz Hotel. Maintaining my predilection for contrast, I took with me no military personnel and no one in uniform. The Spaniards were quick to appreciate my conspicuously different attitude in carrying out a humanitarian duty.

The exchange itself involved a detailed programme in which exact timing was the primary need. It said much for the care and sympathy that the Spaniards showed us, that in a country where nothing except bullfights happened punctually, the work was completed without a hitch. Our men made an irresistible impression on all of us, Spaniards and British alike, as they limped or were carried off the German ships. It was a moving sight to mark not only their cheerful faces but also their proud bearing. Unlike the Germans, a tragic and ragged crowd, they came ashore like conquerors on their homeward journey. One of them with whom I talked, looked at the Germans as they came down the gangway and said to me, "Poor chaps, they don't know what they are in for. They'd have been much happier to have stayed in Africa." Another said to me, "When we left the internment camp, and afterwards, when we came through France, it was we who were regarded as the conquerors and the Germans behaved to us as if they were the conquered." A third told me the tragic story of how two years before he had been taken to Dieppe for repatriation and was at the last minute turned back owing to the breakdown of the Anglo-German agreement. .

One of the pleasantest features of the exchange was the generosity of our Spanish friends. Presents of fruit, wine and cigars arrived in a continuous stream. Evidence indeed of Spanish generosity, but evidence also of the true Spain that hated Nazism and wished to show its sympathy with England.

It was significant that when the exchanges were finished and the other uniformed captains and kings of the German Embassy had departed, Lazar, the wizard of Nazi propaganda, was seen dining in a restaurant alone and disconsolate. The great Nazi demonstration that he had staged had ended in a spontaneous tribute to Great Britain and the Empire. Even Hitler's supermen sometimes suffered from the vanity of human wishes.

The Catalan wine-growers had been particularly generous with their gifts to our men. When therefore they asked us to attend their annual fair at Villafranca, we gladly took the opportunity of being present to thank them.

Villafranca, the centre of a very rich wine district, is situated in the wonderfully fertile country that slopes from Barcelona to the foothills of the Pyrenees. In Suchet's campaign of 1808 heavy fighting went on around it and a tablet in the high street to Captain Hanson, a British officer killed in 1813, keeps alive the memories of what we call the Peninsular, and the Spaniards the War of Independence. I put a wreath below the monument, the first token of remembrance, I imagine, for a hundred and thirty years.

We drove to Villafranca in two cars at incredible speed with Señor Correa Veglison, the Civil Governor of Barcelona, and General Moscardo the Captain General and the hero of the Alcazar siege at Toledo. Upon our arrival we were escorted by the Alcalde and a large crowd round the fair, and at each of its fourteen booths were expected to exchange toasts in the special vintage of the proprietor. As we made the circuit, and stopped at each booth, one of my staff somewhat blasphemously whispered into my ear: "The new stations of the Cross!" Fortunately, our heads and legs successfully withstood the ordeal of this ceremonial promenade. What was more surprising, they did not collapse under the luncheon that followed it with an almost equal number of different wines. Perhaps I had been inured to such trials of strength in the regimental messes of Imperial Russia. In any case, I managed to deliver more than one Spanish speech of thanks for our friendly welcome.

The afternoon ended with a visit to the magnificent parish church where we were received by the clergy to the strains on the organ of "God Save the King." Truly, the sentiments of the Spanish provinces were very different from the prejudices and hesitations of the Spanish Government in Madrid.

Of these prejudices I was given a striking example on my

return from Barcelona to the capital. A running fight that I had maintained for many months came to a head. Without a shred of justification the police and censorship authorities had seized the bibles belonging to the British and Foreign Bible Society and closed the depot in Madrid.

As a constant reader of George Borrow who had first found the *Bible in Spain* in the Vaughan Library at Harrow, I plunged into the conflict with all the zest of a devoted partisan.

The year 1943 was the centenary of the publication of *The Bible in Spain*. Yet exactly a century afterwards I was fighting the same battle against the same prejudice that had impeded Borrow's mission. My story is worth telling as an appendix to Borrow's great book. It shows that in a changing world and in a country like Spain where political revolution is endemic, certain factors none the less remain surprisingly constant.

Since the days of Borrow the Bible Society had maintained its small depot in Madrid for the sale of Spanish bibles. The Society had for a century carried on its work in a quiet and inoffensive manner. It never interfered in Spanish politics nor engaged in proselytizing activities. When Franco entered Madrid on April 1st, 1939, the Society hastened to comply with the regulations affecting the publishing trade, and submitted to the Censorship all its Spanish editions of the bible. In due course the Chief Censor replied that as "the result of careful examination" everything was in order and the bibles could be freely sold, circulated and reprinted. All went well until June, 1940, when another Censor, the Chief Censor of the Customs, visited the depot and took an inventory of the stock. He also assured the secretary that no confiscation was intended. Yet, within a month the whole stock, consisting of 110,000 bibles and, in the words of the order, "pamphlets of a similar nature," were seized and soon afterwards the depot was closed under seal "for reasons of public order." The protests of the secretary were unavailing. Equally fruitless were the repeated representations of the British Embassy. Our words were of no effect. Unlike Lord Clarendon a century earlier, I could make no impression on the authorities in the police and censorship. The Minister for Foreign Affairs was sympathetic. But his writ did not run in the Falange offices. The result was that when I left Spain two years afterwards, the depot was still closed, the bibles had been pulped into paper, presumably for Falange propaganda, and no compensation had been given for the destruction of British property that had originally entered

Spain with the full approval of the Spanish Government. Borrow had in some ways been more fortunate. He at least obtained permission both to open the depot and print Spanish editions. He was able to journey from one end of Spain to the other distributing them. But he, like the Society's present representative, came up against the vagaries and prejudices of the Spanish authorities. The fact that one official gave Borrow a permit did not mean that another did not arrest him for using it. By a curious coincidence the building in which I made my protests to the Spanish Government was the very building in which Borrow had been imprisoned. It was then the Prison of the Court. It was now the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Neither the building nor the attitude behind it had changed in a hundred years.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE PROVOCATIONS that I have described in the last chapter sorely tried my patience. They did more. They made me wonder once again whether the time had not at last come for a change of British policy towards a Government that persisted in allowing and committing unneutral acts. It was therefore with the intention of clearing the issue that on December 11th I wrote to London as follows:

“During the two months that I have been in Spain since my return from England I have noted a definite consolidation of the Franco régime and a growing complacency on the part of Franco himself. The reason for this development is not far to seek. Whilst nine out of ten Spaniards are opposed to Falangism, they have shown themselves unwilling or unable to organise any effective opposition to it. Not a few of them, soldiers as well as civilians, have a share in the spoils of the régime and many more, remembering the horrors of Spanish history, hesitate to face a change of government that might release the pent-up forces of the present discontents.

“For different reasons the Allied governments and General Staffs have wished to avoid a Spanish conflagration. They have been right. They have been justified by events. The African and Mediterranean successes would have been wellnigh impossible in face of a Spanish anarchy exploited by the Germans. None the less, it is disturbing, though perhaps inevitable, that Franco should now be exploiting Allied patience, and the absence of effective Spanish opposition as evidence of the stability of his régime and the excellence of his relations with Great Britain and the United States. To me in Madrid this complacency is particularly galling. I see at first hand the dishonesty, perfidy and injustice of Falangism. I see also the fact that though we may succeed in restraining or stopping many unneutral acts, the present Spanish Government with Franco at its head is fundamentally hostile to the Allies and the aims for which we are fighting. With the Franco Government the Allies will never be able to have genuinely friendly relations. As long as it exists, there will always

be the danger of a treacherous blow, whilst its whole conception of the new Europe is in direct opposition to our own. When, therefore, I reflect upon our present and future relations with Spain, I cannot avoid the conviction that they will never be satisfactory as long as Franco is in power, and that the sooner he and his Falange machine disappear, the better it will be, not only for ourselves but for the whole of Europe.

"When, however, I consider the further question as to whether the time has come for us to take an active part in actual opposition to the régime, I find myself in some difficulty. I put the problem in the form of a simple question. Should we now dissipate Franco's complacency and attempt to shake to the foundations his régime by cutting off essential supplies to Spain, in particular oil and rubber, and in bringing the economic life of the country to a standstill? A year ago the answer to this question was comparatively simple. It was that the risk was too great, and that so heavy a blow with our economic hammer would create a dangerous Spanish reaction against us. Since then, our military successes have certainly changed the whole atmosphere, and it would now be possible to take risks that would have been extremely unwise before the African and Mediterranean campaigns. . Even so, I am still doubtful as to whether it is yet wise to have recourse to our *ultima ratio* of economic sanctions. It is not so much that an embargo upon oil and rubber would immediately lose us definite economic advantages that we at present possess, for instance our grip on the wolfram market, it is rather that I fear that if the daily life of the country were brought to an abrupt standstill, anarchy of the most dangerous kind would spread like wildfire from one end of Spain to the other. The upheaval might start with a massacre of the Falange leaders, or it might more probably take the form of a black terror against the so-called Reds. In any case, it would almost certainly plunge the country into an orgy of massacre and chaos, and offer a golden opportunity for the many German saboteurs in Spain to exploit to our detriment the general confusion. These are no imaginary forebodings on my part. I have in recent weeks received many reports not only of the savage bitterness that underlies the surface of Spanish life, but also of Himmler's intensified efforts to infiltrate German spies and saboteurs into Spain.

"If, therefore, the Allied Governments still take the view that Spanish chaos is to our disadvantage, my advice is to avoid an issue that will bring daily life to a standstill. If, on the other hand, they consider that we are now militarily so strong as to be able to ignore trouble in the Peninsula, we can no doubt play our big card of economic embargo with a fair chance that sooner or later it will shake and possibly destroy the Franco régime.

"My own preference would be against making any immediate reversal of our Spanish policy, but in favour of a definite intensification of our pressure for the relief of our grievances. We should at the same time take every possible opportunity to shake Franco's complacency, and should not hesitate to show up in the press and the radio any definitely unneutral acts committed or permitted by his Government. As to the last point, the use of publicity, I would ask to be consulted upon specific cases as it is essential that we should employ it in a way that will give us the greatest possible help for the future, and the enemy the least possible chance of exciting Spanish susceptibilities. It is also necessary that we employ it in a way not to conflict with the British Government's declarations of non-intervention in Spanish internal affairs.

"Whilst the operations of the next few months may diminish the military importance of Spain, the political problems connected with the Franco Government will probably become more insistent. Public opinion both in Great Britain and the United States is likely to grow more restive against the present Spanish régime. It is well, therefore, to reconsider the position from time to time, and to adjust our policy to the general course of the war and the actual facts of the Spanish situation. We have always attempted to avoid rigid positions in Spain, and to keep the war a war of movement. I hope that we shall continue this flexibility. It is on this account that I send you this appreciation, and ask you whether you agree with it or whether in view of General Franco's manifest desire to exploit our declared attitude of detachment to Spanish internal affairs, you desire a change in our existing policy."

Part IV

1944. FRANCO'S UNNEUTRAL NEUTRALITY

"Que gozo! Ya no hay Pirineos."

(What a joy! There are now no Pyrenees.)

Castel dos Rius, Spanish Ambassador in France, 1700.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE ANSWER that arrived shortly afterwards both accepted my appreciation of the position and approved my general conclusion. It was at the same time agreed that I should ask for an interview with General Franco in order to put before him very clearly the causes of our grave discontent with his régime. The interview took place at the Pardo on January 27th, 1944.

I found there the usual atmosphere of complete unconcern. Before me in the beautiful room, bright with the colours of Spanish tapestries and carpets, sat the Caudillo and Jordana. When the Caudillo spoke, it was once again in the still small voice of a family doctor who wished to reassure an excited patient. On my side I did my best to resist this blanketing movement and paragraph by paragraph I went through the following detailed notes. I give the notes at length as each of the complaints that were made in them, particularly that about wolfram, had many repercussions in subsequent months.

"It is now several months since, upon the instructions of my Government, I brought to the notice of General Franco certain urgent questions that were compromising good relations between Spain and Great Britain. Since then, events in the world have been moving fast and signs have been evident that they will move even faster in the near future. So far as Anglo-Spanish relations are concerned, my Government have noted with satisfaction an improvement in certain directions, and in particular they are grateful to the Minister for Foreign Affairs for his undoubted sincerity in attempting to carry out the Spanish Government's policy of neutrality.

The Blue Division has been withdrawn from the Russian front, a more neutral attitude has been adopted in the Spanish press, and certain steps have been taken in other directions, both economic and political, to bring the attitude of the Spanish Government more fully into accord with General Franco's recent declarations of neutrality. Whilst, however, my Government are ready to give credit to these recent developments, they cannot avoid bringing to General Franco's attention certain grave infringements of the Spanish policy of neutrality that, if not promptly and effectively remedied, will endanger good relations between the two countries and force them to reconsider their policy towards Spain.

"My Government have instructed me to draw General Franco's special attention to three questions that are causing them serious disquiet. There are, indeed, other questions, such as the question of the detention of the Italian ships in Spanish ports and the attacks on Allied consular offices that are also very serious. My Government are, however, not attempting on this occasion to set out in detail all their causes of complaint, but rather to emphasise the gravity of the three principal questions that are causing them anxiety.

"1. *Wolfram*. The first is the question of the new facilities that are being given to the German Government for the purchase of wolfram. Wolfram is one of the commodities most needed by the German Government for the prosecution and prolongation of the war. It was on this account that my Government gave their full support to the request made by the Government of the United States for an embargo upon the export of wolfram from Spain. As a result, the two Allied Governments were informed by the Spanish Government that the question was under consideration. Yet, before the Allied Governments had received any answer to their representations, they discovered that the Spanish Government was providing the German Government with new and extensive facilities for purchasing wolfram upon a larger scale than had been possible for many months past.

"The two other questions which His Majesty's Government desire to emphasise with General Franco himself are, first the circumstances connected with the withdrawal of the Blue Division, and, secondly, the unabated activities of German espionage and sabotage agents upon Spanish territory.

"*The Blue Division*. As to the withdrawal of the Blue

Division, I was given to understand by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and his statements were confirmed by the Ministry of War to the British Military Attaché, that it was intended to leave behind in Germany only a very limited number of genuine volunteers, who would cease to be a part of the Spanish military forces, would wear German uniform, be maintained as a part of the German army, and organised by Germans on the lines of a foreign legion. When I received this information, I warned the Minister for Foreign Affairs against the danger of propaganda and pressure being applied to induce Spaniards to enlist in the legion. I was assured that no such pressure would be applied, and my Military Attaché was further informed at the Ministry of War that only a few hundred Spanish volunteers were likely to remain in Germany and that these few hundred would be absorbed into the German army as a foreign legion. In view of these assurances, my Government have been gravely disturbed to hear that the Falange Party is already enlisting men up to a figure of 2000, that pressure is evidently contemplated for ensuring this number, that levies are to be made for the purpose twice a year and that the unit is to be officially known as 'The Spanish Legion.' My Government have, at the same time, learnt that no orders have yet been given for the withdrawal of the Spanish Air Force unit on the Russian front, a unit that it should be remembered is an integral part of the Spanish Air Force. My Government have instructed me to say that if a Spanish Legion is permitted to be enlisted on the lines of the recent circular issued by the Falange Party, and if the air unit continues to remain on the Eastern front, the good effect created by the withdrawal of the Blue Division will be obliterated and the Spanish Government's policy of neutrality frustrated. My Government therefore ask to be reassured that a Spanish Legion is not to be formed upon the lines described in the Party's circular and that the air unit is to be immediately withdrawn.

"Espionage and sabotage. The third question to which my Government desire to draw General Franco's urgent attention is that of the belligerent activities of German agents upon Spanish and Spanish-controlled territory. General Franco will remember that I left with him in August detailed particulars about certain of these activities and that he then informed me that, if they were taking place, he would have them suppressed

as being contrary to his policy of neutrality. I regret to have to inform him that the accuracy of my Government's information has been fully confirmed, and that although I have made repeated representations on the subject, these activities, so far from having been checked, are continuing as aggressively as ever. In order that General Franco should be left in no doubt as to the position, my Government have prepared detailed and up-to-date statements upon the network of German espionage and sabotage with which Spain, Spanish Morocco and Tangier are riddled and have instructed me to leave them with him for his personal investigation. It is sufficient for me at this stage to mention two or three examples of what is taking place.

"Delay in taking preventive measures. First, the most serious delay almost invariably takes place in dealing with cases of German espionage and sabotage. Time after time, I have given the Spanish Government full particulars about specific cases. Yet it has taken months and sometimes years before any action has been taken, and, in the meanwhile, many belligerent acts have been committed upon Spanish territory against the Allies. I will give General Franco certain recent examples.

"The German S.S. Lipari. For many months past my Government have been convinced that the German-owned S.S. *Lipari*, lying in Cartagena harbour, was being used as a base for sabotage activities. Last November I called the particular attention of the Spanish Government to an attempt made on October 31st by Germans based upon the *Lipari* to sabotage the Italian ship *Lavoro*, lying nearby. I then asked that a surprise raid should be made upon the *Lipari* and the crew and the ship interned. The only action that was taken was to move the *Lavoro* from the outer harbour into the inner harbour. Shortly afterwards a second and successful sabotage attack, organised from the *Lipari*, was made on the *Lavoro* and serious damage done as a result to an Allied ship. In spite, therefore, of the previous warnings that I had given, no effective preventive measures were adopted, and the Germans were permitted to use a Spanish base for the purpose of carrying out a belligerent act against the Allies.

"The Italian S.S. Olterra. I give General Franco a second instance, the instance of the Italian tanker *Olterra*, detained in Algeçiras Bay. My Government had precise information

that the *Olterra* was being used for belligerent purposes. Over a long period they warned the Spanish Government and asked that the necessary preventive measures should be taken. Eventually, a Spanish guard was placed on board. Yet, in spite of this precaution, no less than thirty Italians who had nothing to do with the tanker's crew were permitted to board the vessel and to make use of the sabotage installation introduced in the summer of 1942. As a result, four separate sabotage attacks organised in the *Olterra* were made against British and Allied merchant shipping in Gibraltar Bay. On September 22nd, 1943, a fortnight after the Italian Armistice, instructions were actually issued by the Spanish Ministry of Marine to the effect that the crew of the *Olterra* were to efface all evidence of the tanker being used as a sabotage depot ship and a Spanish naval officer was sent from Madrid to see that the work of effacement was effectively carried out.

"*The Italian tanker Fulgor.* My third instance is the instance of the tanker *Fulgor* at Cadiz. Since December, 1940, reports had reached His Majesty's Embassy that the ship was being used for supplying enemy submarines with torpedoes, provisions and fuel. These reports were discussed on various occasions by the Naval Attaché at His Majesty's Embassy with the Minister of Marine, who consistently dismissed them as devoid of foundation. Having received information which confirmed the accuracy of the reports, I made representations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 24th December, 1942. As no effective action was taken by the Spanish Government, I several times repeated my representations. In the meantime, the ship continued to be used as a base for submarines and human torpedoes. Stores and torpedoes of Italian make were brought to La Carraca in the Spanish warship *Jupiter* and subsequently put on board the *Fulgor* by a Spanish lighter manned by Spanish naval ratings commanded by a Spanish lighter officer. During this period attacks were organised from the *Fulgor* upon Allied ships in the Bay of Gibraltar. Finally, when as a result of my continued protests, the *Fulgor* was towed into the inner harbour, so ineffective were the preventive measures taken by the Spanish authorities after the Italian Armistice, that an act of sabotage was committed on October 26th by an underwater explosion and the evidence showed that the damage could only have been caused by a bomb attached externally to the bilge keel. It will there-

fore be seen that for a period of three years this ship was allowed by the Spanish authorities to be used as a depot for submarines, a training base for human torpedoes, and, finally, after the Armistice, as an object for sabotage.

"Sabotage on British ships loading oranges. A further example is the series of sabotage attacks on the British ships that have been collecting oranges at Spanish ports. Although my staff and I gave repeated warnings that these attacks were to be expected, bomb explosions have already taken place in three separate ships, and it is certain that the bombs were introduced on Spanish soil by German organisations.

"Notorious agents allowed to remain in Spain and Spanish-controlled territory. German agents whose activities have become so notorious that they have been expelled from one centre in Spain have been allowed by the Spanish Government to renew their activities in other centres. These agents have set up a number of observation posts in Spain, Tangier and Spanish Morocco, from which they watch and report on movements of Allied ships through the Straits of Gibraltar. Details of these posts have been repeatedly given to the Spanish Government over a period of fifteen months, but apart from a raid carried out in one of the posts after warning had already been given to the occupants, my Government are unaware that any steps have been taken to bring their illicit and belligerent activities to an end. General Franco will see further concrete instances of what is actually happening in this respect in the memoranda that I am leaving with him.

"Complicity of Spanish officials. Our evidence is overwhelming as to the complicity of certain Spanish officials in these German activities. Upon this point also there is detailed evidence in the memoranda. Scarcely a week passes without fresh evidence upon this point. Only the other day, Spanish Air Force personnel flew in a Spanish Air Force machine the chief of the German secret service in Africa and one of the chief German sabotage agents in Africa, from Seville to Tetuan. This, and the several other instances mentioned in the memoranda, and in particular one very serious case that I am at present discussing with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, have confirmed my Government in the view that many Spaniards, military and civil, are failing to carry out the proclaimed policy of Spanish neutrality, and that if their activities are not immediately stopped, grave and perhaps

irreparable damage will be done to the relations between Great Britain and Spain.

"The German Consulate at Tangier. If these unneutral activities are to be brought to an end, it is essential that the German Consulate at Tangier, one of the chief centres of German espionage and sabotage, should be closed and all the Germans who have illegally settled in the Tangier Zone forthwith expelled. My Government made the request for the closing of the Consulate and the expulsion of the Germans as long ago as November 15th. They have been seriously disturbed at the apparent delay of the Spanish Government in dealing with this most urgent question and I am now instructed by them to urge General Franco to bring to an end a situation that is contrary to the Tangier Statute and is seriously endangering the neutral position of Spain.

"The future of Anglo-Spanish relations. Finally my Government instruct me to make the following general observations upon the present attitude of the Spanish Government. Whilst in no way desiring to intervene in Spanish internal affairs and anxious to maintain good relations with Spain, they ask General Franco to consider seriously where this policy of half measures in carrying out his declarations of neutrality is likely to lead. With the favourable development of the war, public opinion in the United Kingdom and throughout the United Nations is taking a more lively interest in the affairs of neutral countries and of Spain in particular. My Government feel certain that if the Spanish Government persists in giving, intentionally or unintentionally, unneutral assistance to the enemy, long after it is possible for Spain to plead the excuse of *force majeure*, they will not be able, even if they so desire, to maintain their present policy towards Spain. They would, therefore, ask General Franco to reflect not only upon the immediate advantage of dealing with these complaints, but also upon the future relations of Spain with the Allied Nations. If, as my Government is convinced, the Allied Nations win a decisive victory in the world war, it will be with them that Spain will conduct her most important economic and political relations in the post-war period. It is for General Franco and the Spanish Government to consider whether, if this is likely to be the case, it is wise to allow the continuance of acts and incidents that will inevitably estrange the sympathy of the Allied peoples. If the Spanish Govern-

ment wish to ensure that Spain will be accepted as a partner in world affairs by the victorious powers after the war, my Government consider it essential that all acts of unneutral assistance to Germany should be immediately brought to an end."

Franco seemed to be impressed by my charge-sheet. Indeed, he appeared to be taken aback by the wealth of detail with which I was able to support it and particularly by the fact that I had in my hands the secret Falange circular in which instructions were given for the compulsory enlistment of young Falangistas in the so-called Spanish Legion. Once again he promised drastic action against the German agents.

As to wolfram, he undertook to prohibit all further exports during the negotiations that were taking place with the Americans and ourselves and to keep the control of any future sales in the hands of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Whilst he did not specifically pledge himself to impose a total and permanent embargo on all exports, he gave me the clear impression that he had decided to accept our demand and was only waiting for a suitable moment when he could avoid a dangerous crisis with the Germans to put it into effect. The result was that I came away somewhat better satisfied with the result of my representations than I had been at any previous interview.

There was, however, one awkward note of interrogation when I came to sum up the result. Just before my visit an American agency report had come through on the wireless that the United States Government had publicly imposed an oil embargo on Spain. The news had come as a complete surprise to me and the American Ambassador. I hesitated at first to believe it. If it were true, the object was no doubt to force Franco's hand over wolfram exports. I feared, however, that this type of public ultimatum might have the very opposite effect of stirring Franco into opposition at the very moment when he had practically decided to accept our demands. An embargo that he was prepared to impose *motu proprio* and as a result of discussion and negotiation he would inevitably reject if the attempt were made publicly to thrust it down his throat.

Subsequent events proved that my forebodings were fully justified. The issue became, however, so complicated that it needs a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

FOR THE NEXT six months the question of wolfram was never out of my mind. In the words that I used at the end of the controversy: "the word 'wolfram' will probably be written on my tombstone—a word that before the war was practically unknown, for a mineral that was as worthless as dust in 1939, and was selling at £7500 a ton in 1943."

How then did it come about that this hitherto useless deposit in the Peninsula had become the magnet of international discussions, Parliamentary questions, and even inter-Allied disputes? How was it also that it had produced pages of history that rivalled the most fantastic records of the Rand and Klondyke?

The Spanish chapter of the history is worth recounting. It has an interest not only from the angle of economic warfare, but because it illustrates the danger of ignoring national psychology in the discussion of a complicated question.

I begin the history at the time of my arrival in Spain.

In 1940 there were certain far-seeing members of the British Embassy in Madrid who were attracted by the possibility of pre-empting all the wolfram supplies in the Peninsula. It was then, however, doubtful whether the stocks of this ore were essential to the German war effort, and the proposal was never carried to the point of a decision. In the following year, however, it became clear that Germany needed wolfram for hardening steel, although there was some doubt as to how great the need might be. Alternative supplies, particularly in Portugal and the Far East, were available with the result that the most to be hoped from an Allied policy of pre-emption was the embarrassment of the German programme.

During 1942, however, our experts became convinced that the Germans urgently required every ton that they could obtain from the Peninsula to maintain their armament industry. It was then that we decided to embark upon full scale pre-emption. The effect of the German demand and our counter measures was a rise in the price to astronomical figures. New sources of supply were quickly exploited, and the production increased from a few hundred tons a year to a potential of as many thousands. Throughout this period there was the wildest possible gambling

in the commodity. The South Sea Bubble could not compare with what happened over it in the Peninsula. Fortunes were made in a night, desperate crimes were committed in making them, smuggling became rife, and the huge sums given for this once worthless dust were one of the principal causes in the general rise in the cost of living. The melodramatic side of this period is well described in the Portuguese novel *Wolframio* by Aquilino Ribeiro; the business side is shown in the rival figures of purchases by the Allies and the Axis. In 1940 the Allies made no purchases; in 1941, they again held off the market whilst the Germans bought 300 tons. In 1942, however, the Allied purchases rose to 760 tons against 900 tons of German purchases. Finally, in 1943, the figures jumped steeply to 3035 for the Allies with the Germans only obtaining 1309. Judged, therefore, by the actual results of pre-emption, we were remarkably successful, our peak being reached in 1943 when we obtained nearly three-quarters of the Spanish exports. Whilst this excellent result was to a certain extent due to our active organisation, it was to an even greater degree the result of our price war and the German shortage of pesetas. Unfortunately, however, this latter cause was of a temporary character. In the closing months of 1943 the Spanish Government carried through the perfectly legitimate transaction of repaying its civil war debt to Germany. The Germans at the same time sold large quantities of arms and machinery to Spain that the Allies could not supply. Consequently the German Government, instead of being a debtor under the clearing, became a creditor to the extent of something over 400 million pesetas.

The whole wolfram situation was immediately changed. The Germans were once more in the market with almost unlimited pesetas in their pockets. Worse than this, they had, on August 28th, made an agreement with the Spanish Government under which they were to be given unrestricted facilities for buying wolfram up to the limit of their peseta balances. They therefore had not only the necessary pesetas but also a free hand for spending them upon as much wolfram as they required.

It is easy for us, in the light of subsequent events, to blame the Spanish Government for this agreement. I certainly never moderated my criticisms of it in the many discussions that I had on the subject with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. It should, however, be remembered that in August, 1943, German military power still loomed large and formidable. It was the moment

when I interviewed General Franco at Corunna and insisted upon the repatriation of the Blue Division. I succeeded with my main request and although the withdrawal was a protracted affair, the decision to make it was actually taken immediately after my visit on August 20th. It was typical of the Caudillo to hedge after this decision, and having made a political concession to us to give an economic sop to the Germans.

In any case, we were confronted at the beginning of 1944 with a new situation that turned the tables upon us by throwing open to our rivals unrestricted facilities for obtaining the 4000 tons of the Spanish potential production. Fortunately for the Allies, the Germans were not so quick off the mark as they might have been, and it was not until the New Year that they began substantially to increase their demand for export licences.

In the meanwhile, there had been a protracted controversy both in London and Washington as to whether it was worth continuing our pre-emption programme at the fantastic heights to which the price had soared. Already we were beginning to feel the pinch, and our stocks of pesetas after buying many thousands of tons at prices up to £7500 a ton were dangerously depleted. After considerable discussion it was finally decided that the game was still worth the candle, and that we had better persist. The wisdom of this decision was justified by the successes of our Japanese blockade. The recent sinkings of blockade runners had practically eliminated the Far Eastern stocks upon which Germany very definitely depended. Wolfram purchases in the Peninsula had, therefore, become more essential to the German war effort than at any previous time in the war.

It was in October that the Americans began to take a serious interest in the question. It was an interest that first showed itself in the provision of very large sums for an intensified programme of pre-emption. Hitherto, the pressure upon the Spanish Government had come from us. A year before Mr. Ellis Rees had pressed for an embargo, whilst Arthur Yencken had in September warned both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his chief Economic Adviser that Spain would be prolonging the war by letting Germany have the ore. It was on November 4th that I had raised the question very seriously and urgently with Jordana. A fortnight later, on November 18th, the American Ambassador submitted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs a memorandum on the subject that made a wolfram embargo the central feature of the American demands upon Spain. This memorandum, as

the Ambassador has himself disclosed in a recently published book, was not shown to us before it was delivered to the Spanish Government. If we had been given the opportunity of commenting upon it, we should have pointed out the risk of nailing the American colours to the mast of a complete and immediate embargo in view of the numerous evidences that had come into our hands between May and November that the Spanish Government could not yet be forced into accepting it.

There then followed a long and confused chapter of discussion and delay. As I have already pointed out, I had suggested on the 11th December that the time had arrived to push the Spanish Government further into the field of strict neutrality. We had discussed this possibility with Washington, and the two Governments had subsequently come to the conclusion that the pressure could safely be applied to the Spanish Government, provided that it was used with the greatest discretion. The Governments further agreed that there was to be no fundamental change in our policy towards Spain. It was generally admitted that our economic exchanges had benefited the Allies and drawn Spain some considerable distance from Axis influences. The military direction still stood that the Peninsula should remain quiet and not deflect to itself any of the attention that the Allies would need in full measure for the great military events of the summer. On this account, it was explicitly laid down that any pressure that we might apply was not to be regarded as the first step of an economic blockade. Joint action at every stage was contemplated between the two Governments and, in view of the idiosyncracies of the Spanish character, direct threats, and particularly direct public threats, were at all costs to be avoided.

The State Department was at that time engaged upon a meritorious campaign to stop all supplies to Germany from neutral sources. American public opinion was particularly incensed against the Franco Government over the Laurel incident. The strong pressure, therefore, for swift and drastic action was easily to be explained. Fortunately, however, it transpired when the wolfram details came to be discussed that there was no substantial difference between Washington and London. The British Government was as intent upon preventing all exports to Germany as the American. The only question to be decided was the best tactics for obtaining the embargo.

The agreed plan was to be one of stages, the first to be taken unostentatiously and without threat or ultimatum. The February

shipments of oil for Spain, the greater part of which came from British sources, were to be cancelled. The increasing need of the Allied armies were ample justification for cutting down supplies to countries like Spain. There was therefore no need for any preliminary explanation, still less for any threat. The Spanish Government would simply have to go without its February shipments, and incidentally be given a *locus penitentiae* in which to realise its dependence upon Allied resources. I would have been greatly surprised if this period for meditation would not have resulted in a complete embargo.

The objective in fact was to impose the maximum pressure along the line of least resistance, the line of greatest resistance being a public ultimatum that imposed specific sanctions. The February experiment could be tried, and the next step made dependent on the results that it had produced. All would, I believe, have worked well on these lines if there had not been a premature leakage of the plan to an American press agency. Worse still, the agency no doubt like any other press agency in the circumstances, dramatised the news into a public and immediate ultimatum. All oil supplies were to be cut off from Spain as long as a single ton of wolfram left Spain for Germany. The B.B.C took up the agency tale with zest. The result was that at the very moment when we believed that our organised pressure was likely to succeed, the public announcement of an embargo stirred to their very depths the latent forces of Spanish obstinacy and immensely increased the difficulties of reaching a swift and satisfactory settlement. On the American side the unfortunate publicity had made a complete embargo almost a matter of national prestige, whilst on the Spanish side acceptance of the Allied demand meant surrender to an ultimatum.

In the meanwhile there was an imminent risk of the Germans getting the wolfram. We knew that they had 1000 tons stored and paid for in Spain, and large quantities in Portugal ready for export. They had already been given export licences, and the Minister of Commerce had personally promised them that they could at once export a substantial quantity. It had only been with the greatest difficulty that the American Ambassador and I had persuaded Franco and Jordana to suspend all exports pending our negotiations. The American announcement seemed to have ended the negotiations and left the Spanish Government free to withdraw the suspension.

Worse still, the wolfram issue was as I have already explained,

one of several grave questions that we were trying to settle. There were, for instance, outstanding our demand for the closing of the Tangier Consulate and for breaking up the German spy rings on Spanish territory. The Italian ships and their crews were still interned by the Spanish Government. All three Governments, British, American and Spanish had grouped together these questions during the negotiations. A breakdown, therefore, over wolfram might well endanger and would certainly delay a settlement over the spies and ships. These very real risks were constantly in the minds of my American colleague and myself.

The result was an irritating negotiation that dragged on for months. Passions had been roused by the unauthorised leakage and the glosses that had been put upon it in the press and on the radio. The latent forces of Spanish obstinacy had been stirred to their depths whilst the Germans could all the time point out to Franco the terms of their official agreement with the Spanish Government under which they were entitled to export all the wolfram that they could purchase. If it had not been for Jordana's steady help in the council of Ministers we should certainly have seen a breakdown of all negotiations and the immediate export of a large quantity of wolfram to Germany. The oil embargo would no doubt have inflicted widespread suffering on the Spanish people and might in the long run have produced the total stoppage of wolfram exports as the result of sheer Spanish exhaustion. But in the spring of 1944 it was immediate and not long distance results that we needed. The war was reaching its grand climactic. If our invasion of France succeeded, a wolfram embargo in six months' time when the Germans would have no means of transporting their purchases across France, would be of no value to us. What mattered was to make an immediate agreement that reduced the export to an insignificant minimum at a time when the Germans urgently needed every ton and were still in a position to transport it through France. It was no argument to say that if the Spanish Government was ready to restrict exports to a token amount, they could easily be pushed into accepting a total embargo. A claim of this kind showed a fundamental ignorance of the Spanish character. A total embargo meant a root and branch repudiation of their agreement with the Germans, but still more objectionable to Spaniards, it meant the surrender to a public threat. It was folly therefore to insist on pushing the word embargo down the Spaniards' throats, particularly as the almost inevitable breakdown of the negotiations

would have meant the immediate export of the thousand tons already owned by the Germans and ready to cross the frontier. The wise course was to make an arrangement as quickly as possible under which only a token quantity of the mineral, and probably not even in practice a token quantity, would leave Spain in the critical months before the decisive battles of the war. It was to this objective that we devoted ourselves. Eventually on May 2nd we reached an agreement that but for the unauthorised leakage we should have had in the previous January.

That it was a good arrangement for the Allies was admitted on all sides. "*Samuel ha gañado el tanto*" ("Samuel has swept the pool") observed a Minister to one of his colleagues. The success, however, was not so much due to my personal efforts as to the patience and persistence with which the British and American staffs in Madrid pursued the quest for a satisfactory settlement.

The actual terms were set out in a letter that I wrote to Jordana on May 1st and that he confirmed on May 2nd. This correspondence together with a similar exchange of letters between the American Ambassador and the Minister subsequently became known as the May agreement.

All the points in the protracted dispute were covered. As to wolfram, the exports for the year 1944 were to be limited to 20 tons during May, 20 tons during June and subsequently 40 tons a month until the end of the year. If any smuggling were discovered, penalties were to be enforced against the guilty and appropriate deductions made against the authorised tonnage of exports.

The German Consulate General in Tangier was to be closed and the Consul General and his staff to leave not only Spanish-controlled territory in Africa but Metropolitan Spain as well. Similarly, German espionage and sabotage agents were to be expelled from Spanish-controlled territory and Metropolitan Spain.

The dispute as to the position of the Italian warships in the Balearic Islands under international law was to be submitted to arbitration, while the Italian merchant ships in Spanish ports were to be immediately released with the exception of two that were to be temporarily chartered at suitable freight rates to the Spanish Government.

All the Spanish units of whatever sort or kind were to be withdrawn from the Eastern front. The Japanese Military Attaché was to be expelled from Tangier.

Finally, reciprocal facilities were to be made available to Great Britain, the United States of America and Spain for the purchase and export of various commodities, including the agreed quotas of petroleum for Spain.

On the following day the Minister sent me an answer confirming the contents of my letter and reciprocating my good wishes for the success of the agreement.

It was significant that the Spanish press and radio were not permitted to announce any of the details of the agreement. It was only therefore from gossip that the Spanish public heard of the undertaking to close the Tangier Consulate and to impose what practically amounted to an embargo on the export of wolfram.

So ended the major engagement in the wolfram battle. A further operation was, however, needed to drive home our victory. For it by no means followed that the agreement that had been accepted by the Spanish Government would in practice be carried out. The result was a strenuous chapter of pressure from our side to stop exports and of enemy intrigue to transport the mineral across the frontier. The Germans, and the many Spaniards in league with them tried every possible subterfuge and expedient. The intensity of their efforts proved the value that they attached to the export. Frontier officials were heavily bribed, stocks moved at dead of night, and trucks taken across the frontier with false bills of lading.

Our very active pack was hot in pursuit, and many were the strange hide-outs into which it penetrated. For all its activity some wolfram continued to be smuggled across the frontier. The amount was, however, insignificant, possibly 300 tons during several months, and even this trickle never reached Germany owing to the breakdown of the transport system through France.

By the end of the summer German troops were no longer on the Spanish frontier and the battle of wolfram, that had lasted for three years, was finally ended.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE AGREEMENT, it will have been seen, was comprehensive. Whilst wolfram had for the reasons that I have already described loomed very large in the discussions, by far the most important question covered in it from the military point of view was the flagrant use of Spanish territory by German agents for unneutral acts. German espionage and sabotage organisations had been centred in Spain since the beginning of the war. Their methods were well known to us. It could not be otherwise. So confident were they of immunity that they scarcely troubled to maintain any secrecy about their work. Equally well known to us were many of the Spanish officials who were in their pay.

For a time we had to endure this unneutral interpretation of Spanish neutrality and to content ourselves with continuous protests. With the turn in our fortunes, however, it became possible for us to take more drastic action. The chief centre of danger was North Africa. The Spanish Zone was on the flank of the Allied armies, and Tangier, Ceuta and Melilla were nodal points in the German net. Tangier, being practically under German control, was an ideal centre for the operations. A German Consul General of great status had contrary to international agreement taken possession of the most imposing palace in the town. His staff and funds seemed equally unlimited. The Spanish administration was under his thumb and the Consulate General had become the general headquarters of every kind of anti-Allied activity. When therefore in November of 1943 I made on behalf of the British Government a formal demand for the closing of the Consulate and the expulsion of the staff, I was striking at the very citadel of German influence in the region of the Straits.

To those of us who had day by day watched the sinister work of the German organisations and who knew that as long as they were left undisturbed, there could be no real neutrality in Spain, the closing of the Tangier Consulate and the expulsion of all German agents not only from Tangier and the Spanish Zone but from the whole Spanish mainland, was the main objective for the Allies to achieve. The other questions covered by the agreement, such as wolfram and the detention of the Italian ships in

Spanish harbours were certainly important and my staff and I never ceased to press for satisfaction upon them. But as long as Spain was honeycombed with German agents, no paper agreement would stop the transport of wolfram to Germany whilst the British Government, advised by the Admiralty that the Italian ships were of insignificant value, was reluctant to deflect its main pressure from the central to any minor issue. That we were right in the selection of the point of our main attack was shown by the vehemence of the German protests against this clause of the agreement. To Hitler and Ribbentrop the Spanish undertaking to close the Consulate and expel all German agents from Spanish territory was not only a grave threat to the whole system of German intelligence in Europe, but graver still, the writing on the wall that German power had collapsed in Africa and Southern Europe.

Within a few hours of the confirmation of the agreement I received a telegram of warm and generous congratulations from Mr. Eden. My staff, particularly Arthur Yencken, the Minister, and Mr. Ellis Rees, the Financial Adviser, who had been indefatigable in their efforts throughout the many months of the negotiations, deserved every word of commendation that they received.

I was now free to make a visit to London that had been frequently postponed owing to the protracted discussions. Once again I was able to leave Spain with complete confidence that during my absence the work of the Embassy would be safe in Arthur Yencken's hands. Within a few days of my arrival in London I was dining with Mr. Eden to meet the Prime Minister of Australia when I was called to the telephone. The message that I received told me that Yencken, whose aeroplane in flying to Barcelona for an exchange of prisoners of war had for some time been overdue, was now known to have been killed with the Assistant Air Attaché and the engineer in the mountains between Aragon and Catalonia.

The tragedy was irreparable. To me it meant the end of four years of comradeship in which no difference had troubled our unity of purpose and no difficulty had proved too formidable for his courage and resource. To the Foreign Service it meant the loss of a very wise official who was clearly destined with his sympathetic wife to reach the highest posts. The Spanish world mourned him as one of its most popular friends. To me the British Embassy was never the same after his tragic death.

Together we had been through many dark days. How tragic that he could not have lived to see the better times to which his work had made so notable a contribution!

The sudden calamity involved my immediate return to Madrid. It was obvious to me that the agreement of May 2nd could not be left in the air, and that now that we had not Yencken to watch over it, it was essential for the Ambassador to be on the spot. Accordingly, as soon as I had made the necessary contacts in Whitehall and Westminster, I returned to my post.

Before, however, I left London the Prime Minister, in the course of a debate on the war in the House of Commons on May 24th, made a reference to Spain that excited considerable criticism and even more considerable misrepresentation. In point of fact, whilst emphasising the value to the Allied cause of Spanish non-belligerency at the critical period of the war, he said no more than he himself had said before and that Mr. Eden had with general agreement repeated on February 23rd when he had reminded the House that "in the dark days of the war the attitude of the Spanish Government in not giving our enemies passage through Spain was extremely helpful to us. It was especially so at the time of the North African liberation." The very mention, however, of Spain was still apt to create an explosion in Parliament, whilst in Spain itself, Franco and the Falange were ready to twist any allusion to Spanish non-belligerency into praise for themselves. It may be that the combination of Mr. Churchill's picturesque eloquence and dramatic instinct by concentrating the spotlight of public attention on his words gave an impression that was neither intended nor justified. The letter that some months afterwards he wrote to General Franco¹ clearly showed that he had not the least intention of bolstering up a régime that he cordially detested.

As soon as I returned to Madrid, I saw Franco and protested against the gross misrepresentation of the Prime Minister's words in the Spanish press. The British Government and public opinion, I insisted, were irrevocably opposed to Falangism and saw little, if any, difference between it and Fascism. As long as Spain was Falangist, Anglo-Spanish relations would be seriously compromised.

I then proceeded to speak of the delay that I found was taking place in the expulsion of the German agents. Of this failure to carry out promptly the provisions of the agreement Franco appeared to be ignorant. Indeed, he seemed surprised that we

¹See Appendix A for text of Mr. Churchill's letter to General Franco of October, 1944.

should be worrying at all about agents, "most of whom were in his view shirkers from the war and double crossers." The answer made it necessary for me to remind him of the terms to which he had agreed in May and of the serious damage that German spies and saboteurs had actually done to Allied shipping. I finally left with him a memorandum containing details of the way in which the agreement was already being circumvented. He promised to examine it, saying that he intended to carry out all the provisions.

• Whatever may have been his intentions, the fact remains that from June to December, when I left Spain, my staff and I were forced to protest almost daily against the way in which the undertaking to expel the agents was obstructed and evaded. Week after week I was myself forced to complain to Jordana and his successor of the continued presence of the agents in Africa and Spain. Although the Tangier Consulate had been closed, the great majority of its employees continued to remain on Spanish territory. The Spanish police adopted every kind of subterfuge for evading the expulsion orders against German agents. The agents were lost or their passports altered, or the expulsion orders cancelled. If they left Africa, they were allowed to settle on the Spanish mainland. Eight of them to our knowledge after being seen across the frontier were subsequently allowed to return. Winzer, the chief of the Gestapo in Spain, was less fortunate. He was killed, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed us, in a Lufthansa crash on his return journey to Spain. His name, therefore, could not be added to the eight who had come back, although it was certain that had it not been for the accident he would have been readmitted. Names were confused, information was withheld, action delayed with the result that two months after the agreement was signed, 201 out of the list of some 220 agents that I had given to the Minister for Foreign Affairs were still circulating freely in Spain. Even at the end of the year, at least sixty-eight agents about whom we had complained for months and in some cases years, were still at large. Jordana was driven almost mad by this evasion and procrastination. He had signed the agreement in good faith and sincerely desired to see the prompt expulsion of every German agent. But indifference, inefficiency and stubborn obstruction in the other departments were too much for him, and month after month went by, whilst the Germans played a friendly game of hide-and-seek with the Spanish police.

The Minister was particularly disturbed by a flagrant case of Gestapo activity that took place at the very moment when I was complaining of the abuse of Spanish territory by German agents. Count Heberlein, the Minister in the German Embassy, was seized by the Gestapo at Toledo and with his wife, a well-known Spanish lady, taken across the Spanish frontier under the very eyes and almost certainly with the help of the Spanish police. Both he and Countess Heberlein were well known and popular figures in Madrid. The story of their brutal abduction therefore not only created deep resentment, but exposed in the most sensational manner the German domination of the country. Jordana, a typical Spaniard who resented any foreign interference, felt intensely the humiliation of this savage crime on his country's soil. The Spanish Ambassador in Berlin protested against it but with no result. The Heberleins, known in Madrid as anti-Nazis, were not shot at the frontier, as we were at first informed, but taken to Dachau and subsequently, with other prominent hostages, to the so-called "mountain redoubt" where they were eventually rescued by the Allied armies.

It was obvious to his friends that anxiety over this intolerable state of affairs was undermining Jordana's health. Conscientious to an extreme degree he was working too hard and worrying too much. When therefore he had a bad fall in the course of the summer, he had exhausted his physical energy and was unable to throw off the effects. Still determined to continue his work, he refused to take time to recover, and returned to his department when he should have taken some weeks of complete rest.

The end came on August 3rd. He had just arrived for the Jornada, the summer season at San Sebastian, the Simla of Spanish Governments. I was to see him at midday. As I was leaving my house for the interview, a telephone message arrived from his office that the Minister, who was not feeling well, wished for the appointment to be postponed to the following day. Almost before I was back in the house a second message came that he was dead. The angina that had killed his father had struck him down with a wellnigh instantaneous blow. When I hastened to offer my sympathy to his staff, I found a small company of his faithful friends in the Ministry overwhelmed by the calamity. For Countess Jordana whose life had been linked with his in every chapter of his career the tragedy was overwhelming. As for myself, I had lost within a few weeks of

Arthur Yencken's death another true friend who had stood me in good stead at a critical time.

When I first saw him, immediately after his appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I had doubted his capacity. He was surrounded by powerful enemies. He seemed hesitating and unimpressive. In appearance he was insignificant. His manner was apologetic, his language often difficult to follow and his stature so small that when he sat upon a high chair his feet dangled in space. If he was present at a ceremony, he never seemed to be in the centre of the scene. If he attended a social function, he seemed equally to retire into the background.

In his department, although he was universally beloved, he always appeared to be somewhat ill at ease. His military career, whilst it had given him a wide experience of men and affairs, had not qualified him for work in an office. The mass of papers overwhelmed him and inter-departmental battles, of which there were many in Madrid, seemed at times to atrophy his power of action and decision. The most conscientious of all Spanish Ministers, his conception of his duty was to appear in the department at 9 a.m., an hour hitherto unbelievable in Spanish administrative circles, to remain with his papers and visitors until well after 3 p.m., then to lunch hurriedly in his adjoining house, to return about 4.30 p.m., and to stop in his office until about 10 p.m., when two days out of three he would be forced to attend some official dinner. These inhuman hours had for some time been affecting his health. More than once he spoke to me with regret of his happier life in the army and in Africa. The combined effect of these conditions was often to exacerbate my own dealings with him. Convinced myself that the war was moving quickly and inevitably to an Allied victory and that it was no moment for the Spanish "*mañana*," I became impatient with what I considered to be an inability to carry out his undertakings. I felt it necessary to maintain upon him a constant and insistent pressure. Not only was such a pressure needed if Allied interests were not to suffer, but I could also see clearly that from the Spanish point of view protracted delay would lead to a Spanish catastrophe.

It is probable that my persistence added considerably to his troubles. If this were so, it was a regrettable but unavoidable element in the Allied conduct of the war. Never, however, did it blind me to the difficulties with which he was confronted, and to the honesty of purpose with which he pursued his policy of

Spanish neutrality. His difficulties were immense. Serrano Suñer had left him an evil inheritance. The Spanish administration was impregnated with German influence. In his own department there were not a few officials in German pay, and many more with German sympathies. The machine of government, particularly the machine of the police and the press, was under German domination, whilst his Ministerial colleagues with Franco at their head were convinced of a German victory. Here, indeed, was a state of affairs sufficient to dishearten and unnerve this diffident old man. Yet, during his two years of office he succeeded in reversing Serrano Suñer's methods and policies, in transforming the press, in restricting the more glaring germanophilia of the police, in withdrawing the Blue Division, in expelling the German Consulate from Tangier and in restricting to an extent that would have been unbelievable a short time ago, the export of wolfram to Germany.

It may be said that these changes were the result of the course of the war rather than the new policy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. It was undoubtedly true that without the change of our military fortunes none of them would probably have taken place. It was equally true, however, to maintain that without the Minister's persistent influence they would never have taken place to so great an extent. Whilst he may sometimes have seemed to us to be feeble in moving the Spanish machine, it must be remembered in his favour that Spanish administration was so weak and disorganised as to be often incapable of coherent action. The same incoherence extended to ministerial relations. Nothing resembling collective responsibility marked the conduct of the Spanish Council of Ministers. At the top of this chaos was Franco, a dictator who flourished upon division and inaction, an almost inaccessible Buddha without whose detailed approval no Minister was willing to take an important decision. When this background is taken into account, Jordana's achievement stands out in clear relief.

In his unobtrusive, unconvincing, almost slipshod way he maintained an unshakable belief in an Allied victory. He did not believe that victory would come as quickly and decisively as we imagined. He was, however, sure that come it would, and that it was worse than a crime, a folly, for Spain to tie herself to the German Axis. This was no sudden conversion on his part. In the early days of Franco's power he had withstood Axis pressure, particularly at the period of Ciano's visit to Spain in 1939,

and had subsequently left the Government on the question of Franco's autarchist and totalitarian policy. It was not therefore surprising to me when at the first of my many interviews with him, he made it clear that so far as he had any influence, Spain would keep clear of both German domination and the war. In spite of many disappointments and rebuffs he clung to these two foundations of his policy. Such consistency is not often found in the Spanish character. Obstinacy there is in plenty and a full measure of intolerance. But balance and forethought are singularly deficient. It was indeed fortunate for Spain that during this critical chapter the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs was so conspicuously free from these Spanish faults. If we had found Serrano Suñer and not Jordana as Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time of the Allied landing in Africa, the course of our fortunes might have struck against many dangerous rocks.

I had expected that Franco would have marked in some impressive manner the loss of his Foreign Minister. Instead, he seemed to regard it with his habitual complacency as an occurrence of no special significance. So far from coming to San Sebastian to show his sympathy with the family, he proceeded, as if nothing had happened, with a programme of celebrations in his own honour in Galicia. He went to a cocktail party on the day of Jordana's death, and did not attend the funeral in Madrid. Nor did any adequate and sympathetic notice appear in the Spanish press until a translation was published some days later of a tribute that I sent to *The Times* in London.

Dictators, it seems, are immune from the sorrows that touch ordinary mortals and the obligations that are respected in the world of smaller people.

This inhuman complacency on Franco's part showed itself in another way. At the time of Jordana's death it was clear to the world that the Allies had won the war. Our advance across France was in full swing and German defeat was only a question of time. Could there ever have been a better chance for the re-orientation of Spanish policy, and the removal of germanophil influences from the Spanish Government? A heaven-sent opportunity had been given the Caudillo to break with his pro-Axis past and bring Spain into the broad movement that was sweeping all before it. The time, however, was short, if he was to take advantage of the favourable situation. If he hesitated or waited too long, he would find the war ended and Spain still on the

wrong side. Never, so it seemed to me, had a political leader been given a better or more obvious opportunity for extricating himself from compromising entanglements. The immediate step to be taken was the selection of a successor to Jordana. Upon it would depend the impression that he would make on the victorious Allies. Jordana, pro-ally to the core, had unceasingly resisted the equivocations of non-belligerency and worked for real neutrality. From the days of the Provisional Government at Burgos he had never compromised with Nazism and Fascism. Nor had he ever doubted an Allied victory in the end.

The obvious course for Franco to take was to appoint a man of the same school of thought and the same unblemished past, who, now that the German army had left the Spanish frontier, could intensify and clarify his predecessor's policy. Instead, he appointed Señor Lequerica, the Spanish Ambassador in Vichy, who had been a notorious collaborationist with the Germans. It was he who had acted as an intermediary in the Armistice negotiations of 1940, had been an intimate friend of Abetz and a strong supporter of Spanish intervention on the side of the Axis.

Señor Lequerica, being as his friends said *très arriviste*, was no doubt ready to adapt his policy to the course of events. But the eve of the German collapse was not the moment to flout the Allies with the appointment of the friend of Vichy and Abetz. Nor was I reassured when his entry into his Ministry was made the occasion of a Falange demonstration and one of the immediate results of the change was the disappearance of Señor Pan y Soraluze, the universally respected under-secretary, whose help and sympathy had been invaluable to us, and the consolidation of the personalities and influences in the department that had always been germanophil. Outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the germanophil Ministers Asensio, Giron, Arrese and Blas Pérez were left in office and complete control of the internal administration of the country. Falange fanatics continued to hold almost every post of Civil Governor. The police state that had always been dominated by the Germans remained substantially intact.

Against the new Foreign Minister personally I had nothing to say. He was a man of the world who knew England well and Paris very well. In London he had worked with Lees Smith at the School of Economics and possibly as a reaction against the austere sobriety of his training, had acquired a passion for Disraeli. Of the world of Paris there was little that he did not know. Agreeable, well-read, competent, the type of man in fact

who in normal times makes many friends and achieves many successes. I ventured to apply to him the French description of "*un homme qui digère*." The trouble was that his past unfitted him for the post and that Franco made one of his gravest errors in appointing him to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the eve of the Allied victory. His past was in this case too much for his digestion.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THROUGHOUT the summer individual Germans made several attempts to enter into relations with the British Embassy. Although their credentials seemed good, my staff and I were extremely cautious in our response. Any suggestion that we were in touch with Germans would immediately have been exploited to make trouble between the Allies. Moreover, as the result of the war was no longer in doubt, there was little to be gained from contact with German malcontents. Certain of the German generals were undoubtedly trying to start negotiations on the basis of the elimination of Hitler, the liquidation of 300,000 Nazis within a fortnight and an Allied undertaking not to occupy Germany. Any such proposals were unacceptable to us, and there was therefore nothing to be gained and much to be risked by even discussing them. All, therefore, that we did was to refuse to enter into any discussions and in the meanwhile to collect any German information that might be useful to the Allies.

The German Embassy was from all accounts in a state of civil war. Von Bibra, who represented Himmler, and Lazar, who represented Goebbels, seemed to have eliminated Dieckhoff the Ambassador almost as effectively as they had destroyed Heberlein, the Minister. These internal feuds led to many leakages of valuable information. Several reports were brought to me of internal movements against Hitler. At first, they suggested that Himmler was breaking with the Führer and likely to take the lead in a *coup d'état* against him. When, however, anti-Nazi Germans drifted into Spain at the time of the great plot against Hitler's life, it was clear that Himmler had for the time being renounced any intention to side with the conspirators.

One of the refugees who had been involved in the plot and who remained for some time hidden in Spain told me much about the abortive coup and its grim consequences. According to his account it was no sudden explosion but the culmination of an underground movement that had been in train since the first days of the war. According to his account the plotters relied chiefly upon General von Kluge who was ready to have Hitler killed and then himself to take the lead. By a strange perversion

of reasoning he abandoned the conspirators as soon as he heard that Hitler had survived the bomb, on the ground that he could not break his military oath while his chief was still alive. No mediæval schoolman or seventeenth century Jesuit could have produced a more sophistical argument.

What particularly surprised me was the news that Admiral Canaris, the chief of the German secret service whose frequent visits to Spain had caused me so much anxiety, was one of the leaders of the movement. Could there be a more significant commentary upon the Hitler régime than the fact that the chief of his secret service was plotting against his life?

When the final history of the war is written, it will be found that one of the chief causes that led to the fall of the dictators was the want of loyalty in the very régimes that purported to be unanimous and totalitarian.

The flood of rumours and reports that I received prepared me for the final act. The heat had driven the world from Madrid, and together with the Spanish Government and the diplomatic corps we went at the beginning of August to San Sebastian.

Coming events had already cast their shadows on this pleasant summer resort. The centre of its gay life is the diplomatic *plage*, a corner of the shore that divides the diplomats from the rest of the world and enables them to dispense with the Victorian bathing costumes that are obligatory elsewhere. In this select enclosure, the arrangement of tents, being a matter of some difficulty for the protocol, is made in advance of the diplomatic invasion. At the time of the allocation the Axis was still solid in Central and Eastern Europe and the satellite tents were accordingly grouped around the master tent of Germany. By August the satellites were leaving or had already left the constellation. What, then, should be done with the Roumanians whose tent was to have been shared by their Axis colleagues and for whom there was no alternative space now left in the thickly crowded shore? In the drama of great events there are usually comic turns to relieve the strain and satisfy ordinary human instincts. The international problems of the *plage* at San Sebastian provided a tonic of amusement that after nearly six years of war did no one any harm.

Shortly after our arrival we dined at Fuenterrabia with Brigadier and Mrs. Torr. As we looked from the terrace of the house across the Bidassoa, we suddenly saw the lights on the German side extinguished and heard the shriek of the German

sirens. It was the first time that I had seen the Royal Air Force in action since I had visited them in 1940 in France. We were in fact watching an attack on Bordeaux by one of our bombing formations.

Another morning Brigadier Torr saw from his garden British destroyers bombarding German installations in St. Jean de Luz. He was able also to judge from day to day the strength of the German garrison on the frontier by the number of pink bodies on the opposite shore at the regular bathing parades. The bodies were always pink, as apparently the Teutonic skin would not take the tan that the Spaniards and French cultivated with such assiduous attention on the neighbouring beaches.

All this time Germans, Italian fascists and French collaborationists were crossing the frontier into Spain. With Spanish Reds stirring up trouble on the French side and Spanish soldiers deserting into France from Spain, San Sebastian and Irun were in a state of excitement and anxious expectation. "What was going to happen when the Germans leave?" asked the nervous holiday makers. "Will there not be anarchy in France, and a Red invasion of Spain?"

The answer came on August 20th when the German commandant crossed the International bridge and said an affectionate farewell to the Spanish commandant. The tricolour was hoisted at the French end of the bridge and a group of the French Forces of the Interior took charge of the frontier post. Of the immediate effects I was myself a witness. At the invitation of the French commandant I crossed the frontier with Brigadier Torr two days after the Germans had left and saw and heard for myself what was happening.

The Germans had gone quickly. They had not looted, nor had they effectively destroyed their installations or the stores that they could not take with them. At Bayonne, for instance, they had left 30,000 litres of gasoline. They made it appear, and they themselves seemed to believe, that their departure was only temporary and that they would soon return. It was probably the fear of this return that made the French in the frontier villages so reluctant to show their feelings. The streets of Hendaye were deserted and most of the windows boarded up.

The company of the forces of the Resistance that we inspected was composed of the very old and the very young. The men of military age had for the most part been deported to Germany.

As there were still pockets of Germans in the neighbourhood

we did not penetrate beyond the frontier and it was some days before it was safe to visit Biarritz. When it was decided that the roads were clear, our procession of cars, for the American Ambassador and his staff had joined us, met with an increasingly warm reception, the farther we left Hendaye. Biarritz itself was bright with Allied flags. When I asked how it was that so large a stock was available, I was given one of those curious and humorous histories that always seem to come to light in great wars.

It was intended shortly before the outbreak of war to unveil a monument to King Edward VII. Accordingly, the Bon Marché with an eye to business sent a large quantity of British flags from Paris to Biarritz. The flags were duly stored in the Mairie against the day of the ceremony. The war arrived, the ceremony was cancelled and eventually the Germans entered Biarritz. The Mayor, however, rose to the occasion, and informed the German commandant that the room in which the flags were housed contained certain stores urgently needed by the Germans and it was essential that the door should be kept locked and a guard put over it. The commandant, who does not seem to have examined the room, agreed to the request and from that day onwards a German sentry watched over the locked door, and the British flags within it.

The incident of the flags was not the only curiosity that we discovered. Mr. Burns, the Press Secretary, who at French invitation was making contact with a local propaganda official, was stopped outside Hendaye by a picket of the Maquis and, while he was showing his papers, was addressed in broad Oxfordshire dialect by a man wearing an F.F.I. brassard. Mr. Burns's questioner was an Englishman who in the early days of the war had escaped from Belgium and subsequently joined the Maquis. He now seized the opportunity to ask for news to be sent to his father in Oxfordshire.

I was told yet a third picturesque detail. A team of French Basques had fixed a pelota match with the Spanish Basques in Irun. Owing to the nervousness over the movements of the Spanish Reds the frontier had been closed by the Spanish authorities. The national game of the Basques was not, however, to be stopped by officious guards. The French team, therefore, put themselves in the safe hands of the local contrabandistas and arrived on foot across the mountain passes in time for the match. In the team was the local chief of the Maquis who had escaped to South-west France from a German prison camp.

In Biarritz I noticed that the English names had been left on the shops. More surprising still, I found British subjects to greet me. It seems that the German commandants had for the most part been easy going, and more than one British subject had been able to take refuge behind an Irish passport.

The town was full of stories of roving companies of German troops and big pockets of the German army left at key points. One of these hedgehog centres was at the mouth of the Gironde where about 15,000 Germans were strongly entrenched in a position that dominated the river and threatened the surrounding country. The German General in command was ready to surrender. He accordingly sent a message to Brigadier Torr that he would surrender to an accredited British representative but not to the French who had only the *maquisards* in the neighbourhood. We immediately informed London of the offer and suggested that we should both go to the Pointe de Grave or Bordeaux, take the surrender, and in order not to irritate French susceptibilities, immediately fade out of the picture. Whether because the Allied Headquarters were rightly thinking only of the advance through Normandy or because the French were suspicious of British intervention, the authority never came. Hitler in the meanwhile heard of the General's offer and sent an S.S. successor to supersede him and have him shot. The result was that for eight months the garrison held out, blocked the great highway of the Gironde and preyed upon the neighbouring country. It was not until April 23rd, 1945, that it surrendered and freed the port of Bordeaux that had been so urgently needed for supplies to France. What waste and worry would have been avoided if Brigadier Torr and I could have accepted the surrender in August, 1944.

Whilst I was in Biarritz I had further news that confirmed a report that Brigadier Torr had already received of a large body of African prisoners of war in the neighbourhood. Our inquiries showed that there were about a thousand coloured troops, almost all of whom were British subjects, in the forest of the Landes. Their German guards had vanished in the night and left them without pay or food. No one was in charge of them, and the neighbourhood was in a state of panic as to what they might do.

The Brigadier, upon hearing this story, arranged with the French authorities to collect this strange company into two empty convents where we could inspect the men and decide what was to be done with them. The inspection that took place as soon as

they were gathered together, provided us with another strange story.

The men, we discovered, came from every part of Africa, from Egypt and the Sudan to the Transvaal and Cape Province, from Nigeria to Tanganyika and Uganda. With the exception of a few natives from the French African colonies they were all British subjects. During the African campaign they had served in labour battalions and had been captured by the Germans at Tobruk. They had then been taken to Italy and eventually transported to the Landes to work in the forests. Not only was there no commissioned officer amongst them but not even a single sergeant or corporal. Here indeed was a new and strange problem for the British Ambassador and the Military Attaché in Madrid. How were we to deal with this leaderless crowd of miscellaneous Africans in a remote corner of South-west France? General Eisenhower's headquarters were far too busy with the stupendous developments of the war to have any time for a problem of this kind, no Allied troops or British officials were within reach whilst the French themselves had no organised forces with which to control any trouble if the Africans got out of hand. As it was impossible to wait for instructions from London, the Brigadier and I determined to act on our own initiative.

The first need was to keep the men contented. As things were, they were without both food and money. To provide them with both, we borrowed on our own credit several hundred thousand francs from the local bank. They had received neither clothes nor parcels since they had been captured at Tobruk. Action needed to be taken at once. We therefore mobilised the full resources of Lady Templewood's knitting organisation and any stocks of clothes and food that we still possessed for prisoners of war, and hurried them in lorries to the convents where the men were quartered. We then made them a ceremonial visit during which I promised them, in speeches that were translated into half a dozen African dialects, a speedy return to Africa on condition that they behaved well and carried out all our orders.

I shall not easily forget the scene in the convent quadrangles. There before me was the ragged army of African natives who had been dragged thousands of miles from their homes and left stranded within a few miles of the hotels and casinos of Biarritz. With a childlike interest the men of many tribes and languages hung upon my words, and what was more important, took them to heart. For they gave little cause to ourselves or the French

to complain of their behaviour. I am glad to say that we were able without much delay to arrange for their transport to Marseilles and their subsequent return to their native Africa.

A pleasant ending to their wanderings was a telegram that I received from Field-Marshal Smuts thanking my staff and me for our help to his African compatriots.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

IT WAS NOW evident to me that the mission for which I had come to Spain was finished. The Germans had left the frontier never to return, and those remaining in Spain could have no further influence on the course of the war. My mission in fact began and ended on the Pyrenees. In June, 1940, the German army seemed on the point of crossing the mountains into Spain. In August, 1944, the German troops were actually crossing, but as fugitives, to be interned in the camp of Miranda de Ebro.

My war work in Spain had therefore ended. Henceforth, the Embassy of Madrid could safely revert to the routine of peacetime diplomacy.

A wise lesson that I had learnt in the course of my political life was to end a chapter as soon as the main story had been told. Sequels, and epilogues seldom succeed; the work that had been completed in one atmosphere is often a real disqualification for work that is demanded in another. I had been through more than four eventful years and at the end of them the danger that I had gone to withstand had been removed. When I looked back at the vicissitudes through which I had passed I instinctively thought of the Abbé Sieyès' answer to the question, "*Qu'est ce que vous avez fait pendant la révolution ?*" "*J'ai existé.*"

I too had existed—I had remained on the spot and apart from any personal failures or successes the mere fact of the British mission staying in Spain, when provocations might easily have been a pretext for its departure, was a cardinal factor in the course of the events that had taken place. It is a safe course in public life never to abdicate. Stick to the position. No king has ever gained by abdication: a mission in being is better than a mission withdrawn.

I was glad to have seen the full circle of the German wheel. I was none the less sure that its last revolution had ended my work in Spain no less than the enemy's.

All therefore that remained was to ask to be relieved of my post and to take my leave of Madrid. This last act occupied some weeks to complete. It was necessary for me first to go to London to arrange the details and then to return for the final farewells.

Whilst I was in London there arrived Franco's incredible

letter of October 18th to the Duke of Alba for transmission to Mr. Churchill. As there is no single document that so well illustrates the Caudillo's unconscionable self-complacency, I give it in full in an appendix, together with Mr. Churchill's answer.¹

It is difficult to say whether the effrontery of Franco's argument or the naïveté of his method of expressing it was the more remarkable. His thesis was that only an Anglo-Spanish bloc against Russia could save Europe. Germany, the only other vigorous country in Europe, had been put out of action, France had ceased to be a great power, Italy had been irrevocably smashed, an American domination of the Continent would be disastrous. Why therefore could not the Spanish and British Governments come to an agreement for the destruction of Russia and the salvation of Europe? This startling question he answered by ignoring the long list of hostile acts carried out by his Falange Government and declaring that the only obstacles in the way were the machinations of the British secret service and the British support of opposition movements in Spain. It would be impossible to imagine a more objectionable communication to make to the government of a country that had made the Anglo-Russian alliance a foundation of its policy and was pledged to restore the greatness of France.

Did Franco, I asked myself, really believe what he had written? If he did, the only retort was the Duke of Wellington's to the man who mistook him for Mr. Brown. "Sir, if you believe that, you will believe anything." Or was he speaking with his tongue in his cheek? If so, it was a poor compliment to his would-be ally that we should not see through the obvious bluff. Or was the letter one further example of a complacency that dispensed him from the conventional rules of speech and action and caused him to believe in his own infallibility of judgment and knowledge although a volume of contrary evidence challenged him at every turn? Knowing Franco, I inclined to this last explanation.

It was hoped that the Prime Minister's answer would be ready in time for me to deliver personally to Franco at my farewell interview. But the Foreign Secretary was delayed in Moscow and the Prime Minister overwhelmed with war work of more urgent importance. I therefore returned to Madrid without it.

In these last journeys to and from Spain I was able for the first time in the history of British aviation to fly in a British

¹ See Appendix A.

machine direct from Madrid to London and London to Madrid. Hitherto, the British service had not gone farther than Lisbon, and it was necessary to use the Spanish Iberia line to reach Madrid. My original flight to Spain in 1940 had been by Lisbon. I had, however, succeeded in arranging an aviation agreement with the Spanish Government under which the British and Spanish Governments could open lines between their capitals. The result was that my last journeys to and from Spain took a few hours each instead of two or three days, and were made in a York instead of an American Douglas. I was particularly glad to end my official career in Spain with another pioneer flight that I had every hope would lead to as good results as my earlier flights of twenty years ago.

Although I was without the Prime Minister's reply to Franco, I already knew the proposed contents of the letter and I was able to take their substance as my guide when I made my official visit of farewell.

The obvious rebuff to his advances that my words contained made not the least effect on the complacent Caudillo. Nor upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Both seemed completely sure of the future. Both were evidently convinced that Great Britain needed Spain rather than Spain Great Britain. Both were affable to the point of effusiveness and seemed surprised when I politely refused to accept a high Spanish decoration. I came away with the feeling that whatever may have been the result of my battles with the Germans I had made no impression on the Caudillo's complacency. When my friends informed me that this was too pessimistic a conclusion, I told them that the only evidence that I could find to the contrary was that at my last interview the photographs of the Pope and President Carmona of Portugal had been substituted for those of Hitler and Mussolini in the place of honour on Franco's writing table.

CHAPTER THIRTY

WHEN, having said good-bye to my friends on the aerodrome, I settled myself into the York that was to take me home, I started to review the impressions of the work that I had just completed. How had it gone? What was there to show for my four and half years' labour? Amidst many obscurities one fact at least stood out clearly from the years between 1940 and the end of 1944. The Germans had not come into the Peninsula. It did not matter to our war effort whether, so far as the work of the British mission was concerned, it was *post* or *propter hoc*. Franco in his letter to Mr. Churchill and in an interview that he subsequently gave to the United Press took exclusive credit for it. He was now posing as the Allies' best friend, and regarding the future with self-satisfied complacency. Yet this was the man who at every critical moment in the course of the war had publicly insulted the Allies. I could not forget his speeches, how he had sneered at Mr. Churchill for selling the British Empire for fifty American destroyers, how he had gloated over our defeats in Greece, and the successes of German aviation in sinking British ships; how he had threatened the United States with German attacks and told the Americans that their intervention in the war was criminal madness, how he had insisted that the Allies had lost the war and that the Germans were the saviours of Europe, how he had promised that if Berlin were ever in danger, a million Spaniards would bar the way to the enemy, how he had boasted that the totalitarian régimes had proved their invincibility for war and peace alike, and that Spanish non-belligerency did not mean Spanish neutrality.

These were the spoken words of a man who was reputed to weigh carefully what he said. Not, indeed, the words of a prophet, for no public man within this generation had proved himself so continuously wrong about the course of the war. Still less, the words of a friend of the Allies.

Might it not, however, be urged in his defence that in order to save Spain from the horrors of war he had given the Germans words rather than deeds? Spain had been defenceless, and at the mercy of the German army. Was it not therefore necessary to offer Hitler Danegelt to the furthest extent short of military help?

The answer must surely depend on the way in which the Danegelt was given and the intention behind the gift. The Danegelt was certainly paid in full. The details were agreed, first by Serrano Suñer in Berlin and secondly between Franco and Hitler on the frontier in 1940. Franco there pledged himself to give Hitler a free hand in the Spanish police, press and censorship. Spain was in fact to become an occupied country in the second degree. There was to be no German army of occupation. The system was to be control without occupation, but control no less complete and pervasive. A single party, the Falange, carefully modelled on its Nazi and Fascist prototypes, was to govern the country. The police were to be organised on Himmler's lines and were with their many auxiliaries to become a tyrannical force of a quarter of a million men. Special courts, military and political, were to supplant the established processes of justice. Concentration camps were for the first time to be introduced into the penal system of Spain. Unscrupulous ruffians were to be given high posts where they could terrorise their fellow citizens and feather their own nests.

As with the police, so with the press. For three-quarters of the time that I was in Spain the press was so anxious to echo its master's voice that it was often more strident and scurrilous in its abuse of the Allies than the German papers in Berlin and Frankfurt, whilst the Falange radio in Valladolid continuously blared Nazi propaganda upon the plazas of every city in Spain.

In view of these facts no one could say that the Danegelt was insignificant. Moreover it was given, unlike the case of France, before Spain was invaded. Worse still, it was given willingly. Franco and his government made no secret of their wish for a German victory. Serrano Suñer who, whatever may have been his faults, never disguised his feelings, categorically declared that Franco and his government were definitely on the Axis side, and that in the early years of my mission every General in the Spanish army believed that a German victory was inevitable.

If Franco did not come into the war, it was for no love of us or doubt about an ultimate German victory. In June, 1940, and January, 1941, the two moments when he was nearest to entering it, he was convinced of the certainty of Allied defeat. It was the growing hostility of the Spanish people to war that principally made him hesitate in June, and the disasters of the Italian army in Greece that principally made him resist Hitler's pressure in January. Of the other causes I have already spoken—the dispute

over the African loot, the intrigues over the French fleet, the wish that if Gibraltar were attacked and taken, it should be by a Spanish and not a German army. He believed that he could obtain everything that he wanted without fighting. He was in fact waiting, in the picturesque words of his brother-in-law, for "the last cartridge to be fired to enter the war on the lines of the Russian plan with Japan." In the meantime he could not avoid the over-riding fact that the Spanish people were opposed to war.

It was to this last factor that we in the British mission had made our contribution. It was we who in the dark days of 1940 and 1941 had helped to strengthen the feeling against war and Nazism. It was we who had helped to foster the latent goodwill for England and the Allies by trade agreements and personal contacts. It was we who, on Canning's lines, had represented the British people to the Spanish people at a time when the Spanish Government was in the hands of the enemy.

It was the sum total of these factors that had made Franco hesitate to go to war—a mixture of self-interest, fear and complacency. That his hesitations helped us, there is no denying. It is also true that they helped him to cling to his post. For it gave him the chance to claim that he was saving Spain from the horrors of war and that if he disappeared, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse would immediately descend upon Spain. The cry of "after me, the deluge," is usually very effective. It is almost unanswerable in a country that has passed through anarchy and civil war. It kept on the throne Ferdinand VII, the most despicable of Spanish kings. "Spain," Ferdinand had once blurted out in his own peculiar style, "is a bottle of beer. I am the cork. If they take away the cork, the bottle will bubble over."

In the meanwhile, the Generalissimo had allowed his country to be corrupted by foreign control. The Spanish people, the least submissive of all European peoples to foreign dictation, had once again been subjected to the rule of foreigners. The Nazis who helped to organise the party, the press and the police were the direct successors of the foreigners who had corrupted Spain in the eighteenth century, bolstered Ferdinand VII's régime in the nineteenth and imported totalitarian methods in the twentieth. Franco, the Nationalist leader, had by a strange perversion of policy denationalised his country.

There was another remarkable contrast to be noted. Franco, the unifier and centralist, was dividing Spain and fomenting separatism. Instead of reconciling old conflicts and suppressing

the vendettas of the Civil War, he had persisted in heresy hunts far wider than any in the days of the Inquisition. Falangismo or Communismo were the only two alternatives that he had put before the country. If you were not a Falangist, you must be a Communist to be persecuted, imprisoned or shot. If you were a Falangist, you were a privileged favourite to be rewarded with all the principal posts and endless opportunities for graft.

Time after time he was given the chance to reunite the country after the Civil War. So far from taking it, he had kept thousands of political opponents in prison and allowed military courts to impose numberless death sentences after the Civil War had ceased for years. When I arrived in Madrid more than a year after Franco's triumphant entry, there were at least quarter of a million republicans in prison whose families were often left destitute and starving. How terrible a legacy of hatred in those figures, unless a peacemaker wiped them away with the sympathetic hand of one who understood the troubles of his fellow-countrymen! Yet year after year he turned his face against reconciliation, and when at last the prisons began to be emptied, he had delayed so long that he had lost his chance to be the man to lead a united Spain into the new world, just as his cringing to the Germans had made him unfit to collaborate with the United Nations.

These were the charges that I made against him as I took my last look at the Cantabrian coast. Was there any answer to them, I asked myself? And my answer was NO.

And yet, there in the Pardo was the little Generalissimo, fat, smug, self-complacent, apparently unworried by his past, undoubting as to his future, as confident of his indispensability as of his own wisdom. Was it all a pose, or did he really believe that he was the man marked out by the Almighty to sit on his throne and save Spain?

I had done my best to study his mentality and assess his character. I had known Mussolini in his early days and had learnt something of Hitler's psychology when I was at the Foreign Office. Basing my conclusions upon these experiences, I would say that all three began with a pose and ended by believing that what was a pose was really a gift from heaven. Flatterers acclaimed them as inspired and indispensable. Instead of encouraging criticism, they suppressed any opinion that questioned their divinity. Where other men would have been ashamed of their bad and foolish actions, of the contradictions in their conduct, and the fantastic claims that they asserted, they were sure not

only that the king could do no wrong but that the whole world accepted his infallibility.

Such was Franco's mentality. The promising young officer of the Foreign Legion who had given his country brave and patriotic service, had become through intrigue, flattery and self-deception, the chief cause of a Spain divided within itself and isolated from the civilised world.

But if this were so, how had it come about? Surely, there should have been counter forces in the country to check him and to change the régime. Were there not three-quarters of a million men mobilised in the army and was not the history of modern Spain the history of military revolutions? In the reign of Queen Isabella II there had been no less than eighteen pronunciamientos and the revolts of the so-called "*generalitos*" had become an almost invariable method of political change.

It may well be, that if and when a change of régime comes, it will once again be made by the Generals. But hitherto, the army had backed the Generalissimo, most of its senior officers had been at heart on the German side while the rank and file had been trained to regard themselves as the victorious crusaders in the anti-communist war.

The other established institution from which opposition might have come was the church. I had seen much of the church's work. It is equally easy in Spain to exaggerate and to under-estimate the church's influence. The clerical can justifiably point to the profound devotion of thousands of individual Catholics. I myself knew a family of which all its nine members spreading over two generations had joined religious orders. I heard also of many vocations to the orders of the strictest rules, and I knew of the good work carried out in the face of almost overwhelming difficulty by the parish priests in certain country districts and miserable Madrid slums. On the other hand the anti-clerical could claim that in the Provinces around Madrid not more than five per cent¹ of the population attended mass and that in Andalusia the percentage of practising Catholics was only slightly higher. The striking contrast between intense fervour and complete indifference or active hostility is a conspicuous feature of Spanish life. Yet, though many Spaniards have ceased to believe, it should not be imagined that the church

¹ v. *El Problema Religioso-Social en España* by Father Francisco Peiro S.J., Madrid, 1936. Cardinal Gomá told me shortly before his death in July, 1940, that contrary to his fervent hopes there had been no real religious revival in Spain since the Civil War.

did not still retain great influence or that its opposition could be disregarded.

I had been privileged with the friendship of not a few of the church's leaders. There were no Spaniards who impressed me more profoundly with their piety than certain of the Bishops. They were good men who lived ascetic lives and worked themselves to the bone in their unwieldy dioceses. They were very poor. Contrary to common belief, the revenues of the church had been reduced by frequent spoliation to insignificance, with the result that both Bishops and clergy had become dependent on State support. They had passed through a terrible civil war in which thousands of innocent parish priests, monks and nuns had been massacred and hundreds of churches destroyed. What wonder then that the Bishops hesitated to break with a government that did not persecute them? What wonder that they feared if not for themselves, at least for their miserably paid parish priests who could not exist without their pittance from the State? These facts had to be taken into full account before any fair judgment could be given against the church's conformity with the Franco régime. Yet, when every allowance was made, the leaders of the church would have been wise, to put it no higher, to have shown more openly their opposition to totalitarian methods. When one of them, like the Bishop of Calahorra, spoke out boldly against the doctrines of the Axis, his words were acclaimed from one end of Spain to the other. When Cardinal Segura refused to allow the cathedral of Seville to be desecrated by Falange mottoes, he was applauded as the successor of St. Ambrose in Milan.

When, however, the church allowed the Falange to exploit its rites and buildings for party demonstrations, still worse when the Bishops took an oath of allegiance to Franco against which Sir Thomas More would have gone to the block, accepted a decree emulating the worst features of the Tudor Act of Supremacy that placed the circulation of Papal Bulls and Encyclicals in Franco's control, and undertook to become the censors of public education 'on behalf of a totalitarian government, I anxiously wondered whether they were not bringing on themselves a day of terrible reckoning when Franco's régime came to an end.

I had seen in Russia the calamity of a church tied to a reactionary government. It seemed to me that though there was no department of the Holy Synod in the administrative machine of

Spain, the subservience of certain ecclesiastical leaders was creating a not dissimilar situation to that which brought down the Russian church with the state in the years after the last war. I earnestly hoped that it might not be so. For I was sure that with all its failings the Spanish church was one of the few established institutions upon which the life of the country could be rebuilt. I believed also that although it had lost many of its members and the feeling against it was often very bitter, its weakness was a disaster to Spain. I was no less sure that a recovery of its strength would depend not on the support of a totalitarian system but upon its power to heal the wounds of the Civil War, to win the souls of the peasants in the country and the workmen in the towns, and to stand out as the champion of liberty no less than of order.

If Franco had as yet found no serious opposition in the church, it was because its leaders had failed to realise the power that they still possessed or if they realised it, had feared to use it.

Lastly, in the list of the dangers that Franco might have feared were the two oppositions, the Republicans and the Monarchists. Why had not either or both oppositions been able to dislodge a leader who had outstayed his welcome and become an embarrassment to his country? To any one who did not understand Spanish conditions the question may have seemed difficult to answer. In a well-ordered country like England the opposition could make its case, exploit the Government's mistakes and in due course succeed to power. Not so under a totalitarian régime, where there was no free expression of public opinion, and the expression of even private opinion was dangerous. I myself found great difficulty in even talking to opposition leaders, whether of the right or of the left. They were afraid of persecution and I no less afraid of compromising them. In these conditions it was almost impossible for an opposition to be of any effect.

There was another reason that made the answer to the question less simple than it might seem to an Englishman at first sight. In the last century Spain had tried every form and shade of Government from the extreme right to the extreme left, and every one, with the exception of the constitutional liberalism of Alfonso XII's reign, had not only failed but ended in force. There had been thirteen different constitutions and only one chief of state had succeeded in avoiding exile or disgrace. Where then could an alternative form of government be found that was not already discredited by past experience?

The Republicans in particular suffered from their past. The Civil War had left in the hearts of the great majority of Spaniards in Spain a profound desire for order, and a passionate fear of anarchy. However good may have been the intentions of the Republican leaders in 1931, the fact remained that the subsequent five years was a period of autocracy alternating with anarchy. In the ninety-six months of the Republic's life, there were no less than thirty-three ministries, and the ambitious Constitution of 11,000 words was superseded for eighty-six months out of the ninety-six by a Law of Public Safety that abrogated every personal liberty. Worse, however, than the abrogation of personal rights was the anarchy that broke out in the later years of the régime. It was then that were perpetrated the worst massacres and the most extensive destruction of property. The fear of a repetition of this tyranny and chaos had weakened the republican cause within Spain, whilst the disputes between the leaders abroad had made many believe that the divisions that broke up the left front between 1931 and 1937 still obstructed any chances of republican stability.

The other opposition, the Monarchists, also suffered from internal weakness. Unlike the Republicans who had too many leaders, the Monarchists had no leader at all. What they lacked was a Canovas to insist upon a definite policy and an agreed programme. In the absence of such a leader they dissipated their very considerable strength in inconclusive discussions as to whether or not it was best to co-operate or break with Franco, as to when they should act, and as to how they should carry out the change of régime when the perfect moment arrived. More than once they were given the chance to succeed if they had been prepared to take resolute action. There were moments between 1940 and 1942 when Serrano Suñer's policy of fraternisation with the Germans seemed to point unmistakably to Spanish intervention in the war against the Allies. The country was overwhelmingly for peace and many Republicans were prepared to join the Monarchists in an effort to remove a government that seemed bent upon war. At that time the general talk in the back streets of the towns and in the country villages was that "nothing had gone right since the King left Spain." When King Alfonso XIII died, a wave of monarchist sympathy swept the country. Most remarkable in Republican Madrid, the houses in the back streets were spontaneously covered with black hangings. Franco's attempts to suppress the manifestations of grief had ended in

complete failure. Don Juan, the claimant to the throne, was a young man of prepossessing qualities, happily married, liberal-minded, yet accepted by the overwhelming majority of the Traditionalists. He and his young wife might well have made a moving appeal to Spanish hearts. The monarchy was the symbol of continuity in a country that had bitterly suffered from excessive change, and had at least given Spain its one recent period of liberal progress in the reign of Alfonso XII and the earlier years of Alfonso XIII. History, however, shows the difficulties of monarchist restorations. Without resolute action and careful preparations they have seldom succeeded. Don Juan needed much more than manifestos and anniversary services if he was to regain his throne. But when it came to definite action it seemed that there were many who were only monarchists as long as there was no monarch. The result was that, as in the case of France in 1871, a monarchist majority in the country allowed itself to be atrophied by hesitation. The Generals, almost all of whom were monarchists in theory, remained inert. The monarchist rank and file had neither the power nor the will to move without them. Franco with a keen eye for the weak points in the enemy defences exploited their troubles and played on their fears. Monarchist opposition had no greater terrors for him than republican.

And so, as I reflected, I came to the conclusion that there was some justification for the Generalissimo's complacency. If the strength of a government is the weakness of the opposition, the Franco régime was less precarious than many of its foreign critics and émigré opponents imagined. Franco I had once described as the Brer Rabbit of Dictators. He had a way of bobbing up with vigour at unexpected moments and of only showing his head when there was little chance of its being struck. As his enemies were either unwilling or unable to hit him, he could congratulate himself on his secure position.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

IF I ENDED this book with the reflections of the last chapter I should give an altogether incomplete idea of the feelings with which I left Spain. For should I not seem to have been almost entirely engrossed upon my battles with the Franco Government, censorious of almost everything that was happening, unsympathetic to the country's troubles, insensitive to its beauties, indifferent to its fine qualities and aspirations?

To avoid this false impression, I must add to the political criticisms with which these pages are filled a very warm tribute to the Spanish people, and particularly to the many Spanish friends whom my wife and I were so fortunate to make in every walk of life during our stay in Madrid and our journeys about the country. Irritation with the Government never blinded me to the fine qualities of the Spanish people. I will not say that the Government did not often make me irritable. Once indeed when I had been inveighing against the iniquities of the Falange, the Rector of the great Dominican University in Manila said to me, "You must not lose your temper. If the British lose their tempers, all is lost in Europe." It was perhaps worth showing irritation to elicit such a tribute to my fellow-countrymen. In any case, if I showed it, it was against the Spanish Government and not the Spanish people.

Before I became Ambassador, I knew neither Spain nor Spanish. Spanish history and literature I had never studied, Spanish art I only knew through the meagre examples of Spanish painting and sculpture in the galleries outside Spain. My mission therefore opened to me a new world of boundless wealth.

Of all the Latin countries, Spain has the most enthralling history. Full of vivid and even glaring colour, it is never dull and often startling in its unexpectedness. It is to other history what Zurbaran and Goya are to other painting—the black and white of the *tenebristi* and the battle of colour of Goya's cartoons contrasted with the sombre tones of the Low Countries and the more sophisticated styles of the French and British schools. The country that produced Hadrian and Trajan, Seneca and Quintilian for the Roman Empire; St. Dominic, St. Theresa, St. Ignatius Loyola and St. John of the Cross for the Church; Cervantes, Lope

de Vega and Calderon for literature; Velasquez, Murillo and Goya for painting,¹ has no ordinary history. The scores of volumes of Spanish history that I read in the long hours of the siesta gave me a new grasp of the strands, some of the fairest of which came from Spain, that have made modern Europe.

Of the lesser known Spanish classics, two books profoundly influenced me, each very different from the other, and neither sufficiently known to English readers—*El Criticón*, the study of human nature by Gracián, the seventeenth century Spanish Jesuit, and *Las Ideas Estéticas en España*, a history of European culture by the great Spanish critic of the nineteenth century, Menéndez y Pelayo. Both these books definitely affected my outlook not only upon Spain but upon Europe as a whole.

El Criticón was one of several Spanish attacks upon the materialism and totalitarianism of Machiavelli. To Gracián 'Il Principe's "reasons of state" were nothing better than "reasons of the stable." His two travellers who in the book wander over the world, part in the manner of *Pilgrim's Progress*, part in the manner of *Candide*, part in the manner of Gulliver, are shocked on all sides by the savagery of man. Visiting the Inn of the World, the Square of the Common people, the City of Worldly Honour and the Island of Immorality, they note the virtues and vices of particular peoples. The Spanish they find to be ostentatious by nature and by pride. For the world as a whole the need is for caution against notoriety, application combined with mediocrity that is better than brilliance, equanimity that will dominate moods and humours and, most of all, common sense, and freedom to choose wisely the path of life. The essays of Montaigne are not a better guide to the humanities of life. There are no people in Europe who need to study Gracián's wise precepts more carefully than his own countrymen.

The lesson that I learnt from Menéndez y Pelayo's great work was of the unity of European civilisation. There, in six large volumes, stored with a mass of detail that only his unique memory could have gathered, he traces the influences of Greek liberty, Roman order and Catholic humanity, the triple foundation of European life. As I read them, the world of civilised Europe seemed to be crashing, and Spain to have become remote from the liberty, culture and wisdom that were the themes of these two Spanish authors.

Why was it, I asked myself, that the country of the Siglo de

¹ I have omitted El Greco as of Greek origin.

Oro had lost the poise and balance of its great writers and drifted into resentful isolation from the rest of civilised Europe?

The more I read of Spanish literature and studied Spanish life, the more I became convinced that the answer to the question was more complicated than it appeared. It is easy to say of Spain that it is a part of Africa and not of Europe, that its inhabitants are more Moor than Latin and that its isolation is due to a mixture of history and geography. It is equally easy to assert that it is due to the intolerance of its people, or its physical exhaustion after the amazing effort of the Siglo de Oro. .

I do not believe that any one of these reasons is complete, though each of them may have had its influence on Spanish character. I prefer to put at the head of my list two simpler reasons. First, a Spanish disinclination to finish off the simple and necessary tasks of life, second, the Spanish failure to achieve community of thought and action between the government and the people.

I myself could well understand the strength of the first reason. When I tried to analyse my own characteristics at the beginning of this book, I spoke of my impatience of delay in gaining an objective. The Spaniards, like me, were apt to see the target and to assume that they had hit the bull's eye before they had taken careful aim. "The Spanish postillions," observed Richard Ford in his delightful *Gatherings from Spain*, "generally if well paid, drive at a tremendous pace, often amounting to a gallop nor are they easily stopped even if the traveller desires it. They seem only to be intent on arriving at their stages and in order to indulge in the great national joy of doing nothing." The Spaniards were apt, also like me, to grow weary of a job before it was finished. Only two things, it was said, were ever finished in Spain, the Escorial and *Don Quixote*. The result has been that since the impressive recovery of the Counter Reformation great ideas have usually ended in smoke, though in the meanwhile they have pushed into the background the smaller projects that urgently needed to be undertaken. This *espagnolisme* has a very attractive side in a drab world. None the less, Spain to-day needs Sancho Panza rather than Don Quixote.

The second reason, the lack of any feeling of community of interest between the government and the governed continuously stands out in Spanish history. The ordinary Spaniard regards the government, be it monarchist, republican or military, as his chief enemy, while the government in its turn regards him as a

potential criminal to be watched and controlled with unceasing vigilance. The *contrabandistas* in the mountains, the black market agents in the towns, the anarchists in the country villages, the brigands in the hills, are only the most conspicuous types personifying the general hostility to all government. No one in Spain regards the government as a collaborator, still less as a friend. The result is the absence of any stable support of the administration. Constitutions, dictatorships and ministries rise and disappear like mushrooms. Even the best of the political leaders excite no gratitude in the public mind. All government is considered the enemy, all government bad, and there cannot therefore be any good ministers in a system that is so fundamentally objectionable.

Opinions will differ as to whether this dangerous state of affairs is due to the acquired vices of Spanish governments or to the original sin of the Spanish people. I myself believe that it is a succession of bad governments that is chiefly at fault. But to whichever it is due, it creates a problem of formidable difficulty, for any Spanish régime. There is certainly no quick solution for it. Only by years of patient effort will any reconciliation be reached. If any government is to succeed, it will have to take risks. It will have to throw away the armoury of the police state with its weapons of espionage and repression. It will have to abandon the conception of its critics as criminals to be eliminated. It will have to regard the church neither as an enemy to be suppressed nor as a dependant to be exploited. It will have to make the army its servant instead of regarding it as either a potential enemy to make revolutions or a ruthless associate to suppress opposition.

For these purposes it will need great patience and persistence. Most of all, it will need concentration upon what can be done and ought to be done quickly. In this brief summary I can do no more than suggest in two or three sentences my own inadequate conclusions as to what it should attempt in the immediate future. I am not propounding a programme. If I make a parting reference to what I believe to be the needs of Spain it is because I have come to love Spain and wish to see it peaceful and prosperous.

Let then, the government, whilst reverencing the splendid past look resolutely to a future that is not a mirage. The material empire of Spain is gone not to return. Moral influence, however, may in the new world be of greater value than territorial sovereignty. Europe needs the Spanish virtues, the faith that

discovered and converted the new world, the physical endurance that made the Spanish infantry the best in Europe, the dignity of life that the humblest in the land still retains, the belief in things more excellent than material satisfaction—these are the gifts that Spain can give to Europe, and these are the gifts that Europe has never so sorely needed.

Concentrating then upon these moral values, let the Government avoid high-sounding generalities and impractical utopias and start upon a programme of practical reform that will help to heal the breach between it and the people. I would myself put as the first objectives, an established system of justice independent of the executive, a bold programme of educational development that is neither clerical nor anti-clerical, agrarian legislation that will increase production and raise the low standard of the country labourer's life, social reforms that will give better security to the industrial workers, and lastly and most important of all, a resolute determination to heal old wounds and draw the veil of oblivion over past disputes.

Will any Spanish government come forward to undertake this inspiring task? If so, will it be monarchist, republican or militarist?

After nearly five years in Spain I am not so foolish as to end this book with a prophecy. As an English monarchist I would myself naturally wish to see a constitutional monarchy, untainted by Falange poison and based on political amnesty, free discussion and vigorous social reform. Spain of all countries in Europe needs a symbol both of continuity and unity. The crown if worthily worn, as we ourselves know to our inestimable advantage, can be an unsurpassed symbol of both. At worst, a monarchy might be the régime that least divides Spaniards and that most effectively provides a platform for the various parties to make their case. At best, it might as in 1874 open a new chapter of internal peace and economic progress. Will Spaniards accept it? It is for them to give the answer and not for me. I cannot say what their answer will be. When I left them, no one could freely express his views. When liberty of discussion is restored, it is they and not we who must make the choice. Whatever be the choice, I trust that it will not be long delayed.

A century ago Balmes, the Newman of Spain, laid down the principles upon which his country then torn by internal dissension could establish a stable and peaceful government. If I were a Spaniard either of the right or the left, I would remember

his wise words, "It must be a government that does not despise the past, disregard the present, nor lose sight of the future. It must be a government that neither ignores the actual needs of the present nor forgets the rich inheritance, religious, social and political, left by former generations. A government strong but not obstinate, just, but not cruel, grave, impressive and free from offensive pride. . A government that is as it were the key to the arch of a majestic building that is open to all reasonable opinions and protects all legitimate interests." Upon principles such as these it is possible to start a new chapter in which old feuds can be laid to rest and a noble people freed from the grim choice of social anarchy or autocratic dictatorship.

APPENDIX

A

THE LETTER sent by General Franco to the Duke of Alba for transmission to the Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, dated, Madrid, October 18th, 1944.

"The object of the present letter is to inform you (the Duke of Alba) in a clear, direct, and sincere way my attitude and that of the Spanish nation in so far as it affects our relations with Great Britain, so that you may make it known in the most accurate and direct way to our good friend the British Prime Minister.

"The serious situation in Europe, and the role which Spain and England will have to play in the future order of Western Europe, make it advisable that we should clarify our relations, freeing them from a series of disputes and small incidents which have embittered them over the last two years.

"The noble words which the Prime Minister recently spoke regarding our nation" (presumably a reference to Mr. Churchill's speech in the House of Commons on May 24, 1944, when he said, 'I am here to-day speaking kindly words about Spain'), "which impressed public opinion here so favourably and which match another gesture in his youth when he unselfishly served in the Spanish ranks" (Mr. Churchill served with the Spanish forces in Cuba in 1895), "are a guarantee that our preoccupations will find a favourable echo in his mind.

"I find it quite natural that great differences have existed until now between the attitude of Great Britain and the Spanish attitude, Spain being neutral, and therefore freer from commitments and more dispassionate; but as the war proceeds our identity of interests becomes clearer as do the preoccupations with the future apparent in the speeches, declarations, comments, and journeys of the Prime Minister.

"Since we cannot believe in the good faith of Communist Russia, and since we know the insidious power of Bolshevism, we must take account of the fact that the weakening or destruction of her neighbours will greatly increase Russia's ambition and powers, making necessary more than ever an intelligent and understanding attitude on the part of the western countries.

The events in liberated Italy, and the serious situation in France, where the Government orders are ignored and *maquis* groups impudently proclaim their aim of setting up a Soviet republic—for which they claim to have the support of the U.S.S.R., speak for themselves in these difficult times.

“On the other hand, history shows the fate of concepts such as eternal peace and disinterested friendship. That is why fine words cannot have for us any value other than that of good will—that of an ideal which never has and never will be reached.

DANGEROUS CRISIS

“Once Germany is destroyed and Russia has consolidated her preponderant position in Europe and Asia, and once the United States has consolidated her position in the Atlantic and the Pacific, thus becoming the most powerful nation in the universe, European interests will suffer their most serious and dangerous crisis in a shattered Europe. I understand quite well that military reasons of an immediate character will not permit Englishmen in positions of responsibility to make any comments on this aspect of the world struggle, but the reality exists and the menace remains. After the terrific test Europe has gone through, those who have shown themselves strong and virile among the nations great in population and resources are England, Spain and Germany.

“But, once Germany is destroyed, England will have only one country left in Europe towards which she can turn her eyes—Spain. The French and Italian defeats, and the internal decomposition of those countries, will probably not allow anything solid to be built upon them for many years to come. To do so would bring the same tragic surprises which England and Germany had to suffer in the present war. What we deduce from that is clear—reciprocal friendship between England and Spain is desirable. I have no hesitation in saying so, and this need will be the more imperative, the greater the destruction inflicted on the German nation. After stating the need for this friendship, let us now review our present relations with Britain. This will not lead to great optimism, and we shall have to recognise that they are not very attractive, since, in spite of the noble declarations of Mr. Churchill and the good will of our Government, the mist of hostility and coolness on the part of Britain does not

quite disappear, but provokes a natural defensive reaction among the various groups within Spain.

"Neither the Press, including that of the Government, nor the British wireless has ceased to attack periodically Spain, her régime, or her leader, sometimes using bitter and ill-mannered words, sometimes insidious concepts or phrases. This hostility is still more important when it appears in official representations, or when there is an attempt to justify it because of ideological differences, and this from Britain, a country long used to dealing with all countries of the world whatever their systems of government may be!

BRITISH AGENTS

"It is for these reasons that her interference in our internal affairs arouses every good Spaniard, with unfortunate effects in the country. England should not forget that our present relations are the immediate result of the past, and our future ones will be largely influenced by the present. I think that we should not conceal in this letter that the activities of the British Secret Service and propaganda in these last five years have had a deplorable effect in our relationships when these agents have come into contact with the more sensitive and more alive organisms of the nation, such as the Army, the police, and the Falange with its 3,000,000 members. We can, positively, assure you that whenever an underground activity or any minor discontent has been discovered in these last five years it has always somehow been related to British agents. The action which the State was forced to take against these underground activities by foreign agents, and the important part which the above-mentioned organisations had to play in discovering and prosecuting them, have concentrated upon these bodies the dislike, or at least the lack of sympathy, of the foreign agents, and aroused a similar indignation among our organisations.

"You should realise that every activity from outside concerning Spain, whether of a political or diplomatic nature, has been observed in our country. Fortunately, we have even known about those activities which might appear most confidential and secret, but the Spanish State, with a clear vision of the future and of her historical needs, has always avoided the scandal which would have resulted from publicity.

"Another fact to draw attention to is that the Spanish circles

from whom the British agents have drawn their information—apart from any which ‘Red’ and disappointed politicians may have disclosed—are the least reliable and useless in the nation; I fear therefore that the impressions and information which England has of our country may be mistaken or be misrepresentations. That is why I have thought it indispensable, in view of our future needs, that we should aim in this historical stage at clarifying our relations, and freeing them from one-sided and hostile elements incompatible with a sincere friendship in the future.

“The war has completely changed concepts such as strategy and the strength of nations. Everything has grown larger, and if the nations do not want to suffer disagreeable surprises, they must throw overboard their ancient prejudices and strengthen continental solidarity. And though it would be fantastic for Spain to-day to act against her own convictions, and take advantage of the unfortunate position of other countries, thus being unfaithful to the chivalrous and honourable principles which have guided and ennobled her history—epitomised in the typically Spanish phrase *noblesse oblige*—it is none the less desirable that we should work to make our relations more intimate and prepare for possible common action in the future.

“It must be emphasised that Spain is a strategically situated country, sound, virile, and chivalrous, which has demonstrated her spiritual reserves and wealth of courage and vigour; which has a will to exist, has no vulgar ambitions; loves peace and knows how to keep it. She believes that her and England’s interests lie in their mutual understanding, and knows the value of British friendship and the worth of her own. She believes that this understanding and future friendship is possible, but knows also that friendship could be neither fruitful nor lasting if it were baldly and coldly proclaimed without a complete change in the fundamentals of our relations, if it lacks sincerity, good faith, or the positive purpose of mutual understanding, or if, because of outdated and selfish desires for superiority, the aggrandisement of a friend was regarded with reserve, and the differences which divide us were not overcome at any cost.

“And, finally, I think you must make it clear, in view of the attitude of the bad Spaniards abroad who continue to bank on the possibility of internal changes, that should they succeed in their passionate endeavours to offer an easier understanding with England, a supposition so fantastic that it does not warrant

discussion, we must categorically declare that if any change of this sort took place it could only serve Russia's interest. All conscientious Spaniards agree in their views on foreign affairs, and history shows that it is not difficult to win the friendship and the heart of Spain.

"Having put my views clearly and firmly before you, I am confident that your patriotism and intelligent activity will convey them to the man upon whose shoulders above all lies the responsibility for the future of Europe."

FRANCO.

MR. CHURCHILL'S REPLY

"1. Your Ambassador has sent me a copy of your letter to the Duke of Alba, in which you express the desire to clarify the relations between the Spanish and British people and to secure closer and more intimate relations in the future.

"I have studied this matter with great interest, as have my colleagues in the War Cabinet. It is our desire that the relations between the peoples of Spain and Britain should be sincere and intimate, and I observe with some surprise that your Excellency attributes the difficulties now existing between Great Britain and Spain to the attitude of his Majesty's Government, to British political opinion, and to the activities of British propaganda and British agents in Spain. I can assure you that your assertions with reference to the activities of British agents in Spain have no foundation whatsoever, and I am led to suppose that your Government has been misled in the allegation of those whose obvious interest it was to disturb relations between the Spanish and British peoples. I therefore accept your Excellency's proposal that the time is ripe to clarify the position, and after long consultation with my colleagues and in the name of the War Cabinet, I take the opportunity of expressing to your Excellency, with absolute frankness, the serious difficulties which, in our view, still hinder the satisfactory development of the relations between both countries.

"2. I must first of all remind your Excellency of the policy which your Government has up to the present followed during the present world war, as his Majesty's Government and the public opinion represented by the Government have seen it. I have not forgotten that Spain did not oppose at two critical

moments of the war: the collapse of France in 1940 and during the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa in 1942. But I also recall that throughout the war German influence in Spain has been consistently allowed to hinder the war effort of Great Britain and her Allies and it is a fact that a Spanish division was sent to help our German enemies against our Russian allies. During this period the Spanish Government publicly followed a policy not of neutrality, but of non-belligerence.

CONTEMPTUOUS SPEECHES

"3. His Majesty's Government has also been compelled to make numerous complaints against activities little in accordance with Spain's policy of neutrality. I need not go into detail here as these activities have been the subject of repeated protests to your Government by his Majesty's Embassy in Madrid. I feel, however, that I must mention the arbitrary suppression in 1940 of the international régime in Tangier in violation of two treaties which Spain had signed, and the number of speeches in which your Excellency contemptuously referred to this country and other members of the United Nations and spoke of their defeat as desirable and unavoidable.

"4. Now that the war is coming to an end and plans are being made for the future of Europe and the world, his Majesty's Government cannot overlook the past record of the Spanish Government nor the consistently hostile activity of the Falangist Party, officially recognised as the basis of the present political structure of Spain, nor the fact that the Falange has maintained a close relationship with the Nazi dictatorial party in Germany and with the Italian Fascists. I am, however, less interested in the past than in the present or the future, and it is my desire to see all the obstacles in the way of cordial Anglo-Spanish relations removed. I was genuinely pleased to observe the changes in Spanish policy toward this country which began when General Jordana took office, and I publicly referred to it in the speech I made in the House of Commons on May 24.

"Unfortunately, as you acknowledge in your letter to the Duke of Alba, this was not sufficient to remove all the barriers, remaining between our two countries. As long as these exist the development of more intimate relations of friendship and co-operation with Spain—desired by his Majesty's Government—will meet with difficulties and it is out of the question for his

Majesty's Government to support Spanish aspirations to participate in the future peace settlements. Neither do I think it likely that Spain will be invited to join the future world organisation.

"5. Your letter to the Duke of Alba contains several references to Russia which—in view of our relations of friendship and alliance with Russia—I cannot pass without comment. I should let your Excellency fall into serious error if I did not remove from your mind the idea that his Majesty's Government would be ready to consider any *bloc* of Powers based on hostility to our Russian allies, or on any assumed need of defence against them. His Majesty's Government's policy is firmly based on the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of 1942, and considers permanent Anglo-Russian collaboration within the framework of the future world organisation as essential, not only to her own interests, but also to the future peace and prosperity of Europe as a whole.

"6. Finally, I beg your Excellency to understand that I should not have allowed myself to be so outspoken, but for the wish which your Excellency expressed so frankly to clarify Anglo-Spanish relations, and for my own conviction that relations of friendship and co-operation between our two countries are desirable and that they can develop and be maintained only within the framework of the principles I have offered for your Excellency's consideration."

WINSTON CHURCHILL.

APPENDIX

B

THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT AND THE AXIS—OFFICIAL GERMAN DOCUMENTS

IT WILL BE remembered that the account of my Spanish mission has been based on the daily notes that I made in Madrid. Nothing, therefore, that I have written can be criticised as wisdom after the event. For better or worse both my descriptions and my comments were the result of what I saw and heard at the time. Often indeed I had to guess, often also to depend on gossip in a country where there was no liberty of opinion and the Germans controlled the press, censorship and police. In these circumstances it was always possible for me to make mistakes when I tried to appreciate the course of events.

Franco and his friends have been sedulously declaring that I made many and that they vitiated my whole outlook upon the Spanish situation. According to Falange propaganda the British Ambassador was both a fool and a knave. A fool because he created for himself imaginary dangers that did not exist, and a knave because he suppressed any account of Franco's friendliness to the Allies and described the Falange régime as fundamentally hostile. Look at this foolish and malicious Ambassador, say the propagandists. He was so completely distraught when he first went to Spain that he believed his country and his worthless self in danger when Franco had no intention of siding with the Axis or embarrassing the Allies. He remained so bigoted and suspicious that he continued to discover mares' nests and to insist that Franco and his Government were not to be trusted. The opinions of such a man, who is evidently only anxious to advertise himself and his mission, are not worth a moment's consideration.

This is the criticism of what I have written. The details that I have already given go far to answer it. If, however, they are not sufficient, a wealth of uncontrovertible evidence has recently been brought to light since the time when I collected my contemporary impressions.

The American Army of Occupation has discovered in occupied Germany the confidential correspondence between Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, and the detailed accounts of the interviews that took place between them and their ministers. Let then anyone who questions the accuracy of my conclusions

refer to the volume based on these discoveries and recently published by the State Department entitled *The Spanish Government and the Axis—Official German Documents*. In it will be found fifteen documents that clearly prove, firstly, Franco's complete solidarity with the Axis, secondly his carefully laid plans to intervene against the Allies if and when a really favourable opportunity arose and, thirdly, his intrigue to obtain Gibraltar and Morocco and to close the Mediterranean to Great Britain. Incidentally the documents vividly illustrate the point that I have made in my memoirs as to the rival ambitions of the three dictators. In this case at least there was to be no honour amongst thieves. Each of the three wanted all North Africa. Fortunately for us, however, their hatred of the democracies was made subservient to their jealousy of each other.

Whilst every paragraph of the volume deserves attention as unanswerable evidence against Franco, the following extracts are particularly worth quoting as illustrations of his hatred of the democracies.

NO. 1. MEMORANDUM BY THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN MADRID.

STRICTLY SECRET!

Berlin, August 8, 1940.

OPERATION: GIBRALTAR.

Conditions for Spain's entry into the war.

According to a memorandum presented in June of this year by the Spanish Embassy, the Spanish Government declares itself ready, under certain conditions, to give up its position as a "non-belligerent" state and to enter the war on the side of Germany and Italy. The Spanish Foreign Minister, and also the Minister of the Interior, have up to the last few days repeatedly pointed out this Spanish offer to me, so that it may be assumed that Spain even to-day will keep its promise made in June.

As conditions for entry into the war, the Spanish Government cites the following:

1. Fulfilment of a set of national territorial demands, Gibraltar, French Morocco, that part of Algeria colonized and predominantly inhabited by Spaniards (Orán), and further the enlargement of Rio de Or, and of the colonies in the Gulf of Guinea;

2. Making available military and other assistance required for carrying on the war. . . .

Advantages of the Operation.

1. The effect of the declaration of war on England by a new country will be very strong in England and on the entire world; England's prestige and her prospects for victory will receive a new severe blow, while—upon success of the operation our prestige will be greatly increased.
2. England will no longer be able to carry on trade with Spain, thus will receive from there no more ores and above all no more pyrites.
3. Nullification of English property rights in ore and copper, mines, et cetera.
4. A victorious execution of the operation will mean the control of the Straits. . . .

NO. 2. LETTER FROM GENERAL FRANCO TO MUSSOLINI.

Chief of State and Generalissimo of the Spanish Army.

Madrid, August 15, 1940.

DEAR DUCE:

Since the beginning of the present conflict, it has been our intention to make the greatest efforts in our preparations, in order to enter the foreign war at a favourable opportunity in proportion to the means at our disposal, since the lack of the most vital provisions and the interruption of communications with Italy and Germany hindered every operation at the moment.

The rapid and devastating victories in Flanders altered the situation; the defeat of France liberated our frontiers, lessening the grave tension which we along with our Moroccans have been bearing since our Civil War.

From this moment, our horizon became brighter, our operation became possible and could become very effective, once the difficulties of provisioning have been removed.

In this manner, upon the entry of your Nation into the war, we had to take a clearer stand, one of alertness, changing to one of non-belligerency, which, in the field of foreign affairs, could not fail to have great repercussions.

Spain in addition to the contribution which she made to the establishment of the New Order, through our years of hard struggle, offers another in preparing herself to take her place in the struggle against the common enemies.

In this sense, we have requested from Germany the necessities for action, while we push forward the preparations and make every effort to better the provisioning situation as far as possible.

For all these reasons, you will understand the urgency in writing you, to ask your solidarity in these aspirations for the achievement of our security and greatness, while I at the same time assure you of our unconditional support for your expansion and your future.

With my greatest admiration for the brave Italian comrades who are fighting so gloriously, I send you my most cordial regards.

F. FRANCO.

To His Excellency,
Señor Benito Mussolini,
Head of the Italian Government,
Italy.

NO. 3. LETTER FROM MUSSOLINI TO GENERAL FRANCO.

The Chief of Government
and Duce of Fascism.

Rome, August 25, 1940.

To the Head of the Spanish Government

Generalissimo Don Francisco Franco Bahamonde,
Madrid.

DEAR FRANCO:

It is clear to me that Spain, after three years of civil war, needed a long period of recuperation, but events will not permit it, and your domestic economic condition will not get worse when you change from non-belligerency to intervention.

There is no doubt that after France, Great Britain will be defeated; the British régime exists only on one single element: the lie.

I certainly do not need to tell you that you, in your aspirations, can count on the full solidarity of Fascist Italy. . . .

NO. 4. NOTES OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE FÜHRER AND THE SPANISH MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, SERRANO SUÑER, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE REICHS FOREIGN MINISTER IN BERLIN ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1940.

As a preliminary Serrano Suñer delivered a short and spontaneous message of Generalissimo Franco, in which the latter expressed to the Führer his gratitude, sympathy and high esteem and emphasised to him his loyalty of yesterday, of to-day and for always. . . . With reference to the war material, Suñer declared that the details of the Spanish wishes had been conveyed to Admiral Canaris and Suñer made precise the wish for placing

artillery at their disposal specifying that the Spaniards considered ten 38-centimetre guns necessary for Gibraltar. . . .

In the Gibraltar undertaking, it would be primarily a matter of taking the fortress itself with extraordinary speed and protecting the Straits. . . .

He was asking the Führer whether he was ready to put down in writing the views just expressed so that he could convey them to General Franco on his return.

The Führer promised this and emphasised that the question of the capture of Gibraltar had already been studied exactly by the Germans. For example, a commission of German front-line officers who had had a leading part in the conquest of important French and Belgian fortifications, like Fort Eben Emael and the Maginot Line, had gone to Spain in order to examine the question on the spot. On the basis of the impressions of this commission as well as of the particulars about the condition of Gibraltar which Germany had possessed from former time or obtained recently through Admiral Canaris they had come to the conclusion that Gibraltar could be conquered by a modern attack with relatively modest means. It was a matter of methods which Germany had already used so successfully in the west. Gibraltar was definitely less capable of resistance than the fortifications in the west.

As soon as Gibraltar was taken, the problem of the Mediterranean would therewith be settled and no serious danger from French Morocco either could any longer threaten. . . .

Serrano Suñer remarked that Germany had won the war and could claim the leadership in the New Order. The defence of the European-African area, however, must take place within the framework of a military alliance of the three powers and of a wise policy. . . .

No. 5. LETTER FROM GENERALISSIMO FRANCO TO HITLER.
Chief of State

Generalissimo of the

National Military Forces

September 22, 1940.

. . . I am in agreement with you that driving the English out of the Mediterranean Sea will improve the condition of our transports, although it is self-evident that not all questions of the provisioning of Spain will be solved thereby since there are many products and raw material which Spain lacks, and which are not to be found in the Mediterranean basin.

I am likewise, of the opinion that the first act in our attack must consist in the occupation of Gibraltar. In this sense our military policy in the Straits since 1936 has been directed by anticipating the English intentions of expanding and protecting their bases.

I agree with your opinion that it is possible to aim at the success of this operation within a few days by the use of modern equipment and tried troops. In this sense, the equipment which you offer me will be of great effect.

For our part, we have been preparing the operation in secret for a long time, since the area in which it is to take place has no suitable network of communications.

I would like to thank you, dear Führer, once again for the offer of solidarity. I reply with the assurance of my unchangeable and sincere adherence to you personally, to the German people and to the cause for which you fight. I hope, in defence of the cause, to be able to renew the old bonds of comradeship between our armies. . . .

NO. 8. NOTES ON THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE FUHRER AND THE CAUDILLO IN THE FÜHRER'S PARLOUR CAR AT THE RAILROAD STATION AT HENDAYE ON OCTOBER 23, 1940.

At the beginning the Caudillo expressed his satisfaction about the fact that he was at the moment able to make the personal acquaintance of the Führer and to render to him Spain's thanks for everything that Germany has done for his country up to the present. Spain has always been allied with the German people spiritually without any reservation and in complete loyalty. In the same sense, Spain has in every moment felt herself at one with the Axis. In the Civil War the soldiers of the three countries had fought together and a profound unity has arisen among them. Likewise, Spain would in the future attach herself closely to Germany for historically there were between Spain and Germany, only forces of unity, and none of separation.

In the present war as well, Spain would gladly fight at Germany's side.

NO. 9. GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE MEMORANDUM.

Berlin, October 31, 1940.

Reporter: Councillor of Legation Kramarz.

Note.

The Naval Warfare Command informs that the necessity exists in connection with naval operations in the Bay of Biscay

for being able to supply German destroyers with fuel in out-of-the-way bays of the Spanish coast. For this purpose, German tankers would be sent there, from which replenishing would take place by night in order thus to guarantee the secrecy. The Naval Warfare Command has in this connection pointed to the fact that the Spanish Government has already shown similar obligingness in the supplying of German U-boats. . . .

NO. 10. TELEGRAM FROM THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN MADRID
TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE IN BERLIN.

Madrid, December 5, 1941.

In reply to proposal made by Embassy as instructed, Foreign Minister has now informed that Spanish Government has agreed to the placing in readiness of German tankers in out-of-the-way bays of the Spanish coast for the supplying of German destroyers with fuel. Foreign Minister vigorously requested observing greatest caution in carrying out measure.

STOHRER.

NO. 12. LETTER FROM HITLER TO FRANCO, FEBRUARY 6, 1941.

February 6, 1941.

I believe that we three men, the Duce, you, and I, are bound to one another by the most rigorous compulsion of history that is possible, and that thus we in this historical analysis ought to obey as the supreme commandment the realisation that in such difficult times, not so much an apparently wise caution as the bold heart, rather, can save nations.

Moreover, Caudillo, this war is decided regardless of what ephemeral successes the British believe they can achieve anywhere on the periphery. For independently thereof, the fact remains that the British power in Europe is broken and that the mightiest military machine in the world stands ready for every additional task which may be put to it to solve. And how good and reliable this instrument is, the future will prove. . . .

NO. 13. LETTER FROM GENERAL FRANCO TO HITLER.

El Pardo, February 26, 1941.

DEAR FUHRER:

Your letter of the 6th makes me wish to send you my reply promptly, since I consider it necessary to make certain clarifications and confirmation of my loyalty.

I consider as you yourself do that the destiny of history has

united you with myself and with the Duce in an indissoluble way. I have never needed to be convinced of this and as I have told you more than once, our Civil War since its very inception and during its entire course is more than proof. I also share your opinion that the fact that Spain is situated on both shores of the Strait forces her to the utmost enmity toward England, who aspires to maintain control of it.

I want to dispel all shadow of doubt and declare that I stand ready at your side, entirely and decidedly at your disposal, united in a common historical destiny, desertion from which would mean my suicide and that of the Cause which I have led and represent in Spain. I need no confirmation of my faith in the triumph of your Cause and I repeat that I shall always be a loyal follower of it. . . .

NO. 15. NOTES ON CONVERSATION BETWEEN GENERAL FRANCO
AND AMBASSADOR DIECKHOFF.

Berlin, December 15, 1943.

" . . . I"—i.e. the German Ambassador—"then mentioned in detail those points to which we especially objected (concession by the Spanish Government in the question of passage of French fugitives through Spain to North Africa, compliant conduct of the Spanish Government in the question of Italian merchant ships in Spanish harbours, unjustified internment of various German U-boat crews, withdrawal of the Blue Division, action against German ships in Vigo and in the Canary Islands and so forth). . . .

* "The Chief of State listened to me seriously and calmly and then stated the following: He would like to emphasise at once that there was no question of the Spanish foreign policy changing. He knew quite certainly that the German policy was pursuing the objective of strengthening Spain, while the English and American policies traditionally aimed at weakening Spain. Further, he knew for certain and was clearly conscious of the fact that only the victory of Germany would make possible the continued existence of the régime of Franco; a victory of the Anglo-Saxons, in spite of all the pacifying declarations which would be made to him from time to time in this respect by the English and American side, would mean his own annihilation. He therefore was hoping with all his heart for the victory of Germany as he had only one wish that this victory would come as soon as possible. . . .

"As concerned the Italian ships in Spanish harbours, the Caudillo emphasised that the warships were interned and would remain interned; the crews of the warships would be transported into Spanish camps. . . . On the question of the U-boat crews the Caudillo was of the opinion that on this point the English had been extraordinarily sharp in insisting that these crews be interned. The situation according to international law—contrary to the German assertions—had not been cleared up totally without objection, and the Spanish Government had therefore considered it wiser to proclaim for the time being the internment. He could assure me, however, that the crews would be set free gradually, as had already happened in previous cases; and, moreover, the most important officer, Lieutenant Commander Brandi, the wearer of the Oak Leaves, had, with the consent of the Spanish Government, immediately been let out of Spain. . . .

"The Chief of State concluded the conversation in a very cordial fashion, by emphasising again his hope for the German victory and his friendship for Germany and very warmly requested me to greet the Führer most cordially on his behalf. . . ."

A detailed study of the documents from which these extracts are taken clearly shows that Franco was throughout the period of my mission determined to enter the war on the side of the Axis provided that he was not involved in any serious fighting. He and his Falange Government never wavered in their hostility to the Allies although as the Allied fortunes improved they were gradually forced to restrain their outward and more aggressive feelings. Even, however, at the end of 1943 he was telling the German Ambassador that he was completely on the side of Hitler and the Axis.

The documents in fact provide a complete *piece justificative* for the repeated protests that I made in Madrid; for my considered statement in December, 1943, that the British Government could never be on good relations with Franco Spain and for Mr. Winston Churchill's letter of February, 1945, in which he exploded Franco's claim to have observed strict neutrality during the war.

INDEX

- Abetz, 77, 273.
 Africa, North, Axis and Spanish ambitions in, 48-49, 93, 104, 172, 308 *et seq*; British policy in, 81, 109; *see also* Morocco, Tangier, "Torch."
 Alba, Duke of, 18, 225, 283, 300, 305.
 Albiz, Count, 224.
 Alfonso, Infante of Bourbon-Orleans, 65-66.
 America, interest in Spain and Africa, 97; co-operation in Spain, 105 *et seq*; oil embargo, 256; purchases of wolfram, 259 *et seq*; *see also* Roosevelt.
 Andalusia, 154 *et seq*.
 Apfel, Edwin, imprisonment of, 201, 223-25.
 Aranda, General, 205.
 Ark Royal, 126.
 Arrese, José Luis de, 165, 181, 217-18, 273.
 Arriba, 43, 55, 57.
 Asensio, General Carlos, 181, 224, 273.
 Azores, air bases in, 239, 241.

 Badoglio, Marshal, 213, 214, 216.
 Baleztena, Joaquin, 151, 152.
 Barcelona, atmosphere in, 144-45; exchange of wounded at, 242-43.
 Baudoin, 88, 90.
 Baume, Comte de la, 51-52, 83, 87, 89, 90.
 Beatrice, Infanta, 66.
 Beaverbrook, Lord, as Minister of Aircraft Production, 13-14; letters to, 31, 36, 41-42.
 Beigbeder, Colonel, 42, 45, 46, 83, 85; and Morocco, 37; personality of, 50, 53; political beliefs, 50-51; and Tangier, 51-52; and the Press, 55-56; conflict with Suñer, 55-56, 57, 58-59, 168-69; and the Portuguese Agreement, 58-59; proposals for Anglo-Spanish Agreement, 67-71; dismissal, 71-74.
 Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 204-205.
 Biarritz, 278-79.
 Bible Society, depot closed, 244-45.
 Bibra, von, 275.
 Blue Division, 196, 204, 250; recruitment for, 138-39, 251, 256; withdrawal from Russia, 259.
 Britain, trade negotiations with Spain, 29, 43, 62-64, 81, 96, 98-100, 113, 173, 247, 264; subjects maltreated in Spain, 50, 77, 79-81, 200, 223-25; alliance with Portugal, 69; prisoners of war in Spain, 77-78, 226-36; Note to Franco, 113-14; policy in Spain, 108-10, 121-22, 239-40, 260; view of the war, 185-89; army, 186, 194; navy, 186-87, 194-95; air power of, 187-88, 194; shipping sabotaged, 199, 252-54, 268; exchange of wounded, 242-43; pre-emption of wolfram, 257 *et seq*; the May Agreement, 263-64; *see also* "Torch."
 British Embassy, Madrid, *modus operandi* and staff, 28, 30, 32, 130 *et seq*; attacked, 114 *et seq*; and Gibraltar, 160.
 Bulletin of the Madrid Embassy, 134-35.
 Burns, Tom, 134, 279.
 Butler, R. A., letter to, 35.

 Campbell, Sir Ronald, 124.
 Canaris, Admiral, 65, 196, 276.
 Carceller, Dometrio, 98-100, 140.
 Carol, King, 238.
 Casablanca, 27, 162, 163.
 Castellano, General, 213, 214-15.
 Ceuta, Italian activities in, 199; consulate at, 200.
 Chamberlain, Neville, 12, 13; consultation with, 15; letters to, 31, 38-40.
 Chatfield, Lord, 15.
 Churchill, Winston, 12, 13, 17-18, 61, 107, 120-21, 138; correspondence with, 35, 38, 107-108; on Spain, 267; Franco letter to, 283, 301-304; reply, 304-306.
 Ciano, Count, 56, 77, 271.
 Communism, the Spanish view, 190-92, 221, 283, 300 *et seq*; the British view, 188-89, 193-95, 306.
 Compostella, 147-48.
 Cooper, Alfred Duff, letter to, 32.

 Dakar, naval action, 86-87.
 Darlan, Admiral, 88-94; and de Gaulle, 84, 87.
 Das Reich, 128-29.
 De Gaulle, General, 84, 87.
 De Wiart, General Carton, 215-16.
 Dieckhoff, 218, 275, 314.
 Dill, General Sir John, 120.
 Dobbie, Sir William, 159.
 Don Carlos, Infante, 154-55.
 Don Juan, 152, 155, 29.
 Donovan, Colonel Bill, 107 *et seq*.
 Dowding, Air Marshal Sir Hugh, 14.
 Duff, Sir Patrick, 17.

- Eden, Anthony, Note on Franco speech, 113; correspondence with, 116-17, 182, 235.
- Eisenhower, General, 162.
- Farquhar, Harold, 231.
- France, capitulation of, 26, 27; fleet, 27, 84-91, 93-94; Spanish view of, 34, 40; Anglo-French discussions, 83, 89-91; government, 88; Resistance movement, 229-30, 277; German retreat in, 277-79.
- Franco, General, interviews with, 23, 25, 45-48, 116, 173-74, 221-22, 249-56, 284; attitude towards the Axis, 34, 92, 94-95, 111, 184-85; accessibility of, 46, 271; and the Portuguese Agreement, 58-59; complacency of, 47-48, 95, 184, 208, 218, 221-22, 246, 272, 283; belief in Axis victory, 48, 92, 104, 286; and Gibraltar, 48-49, 93, 312; dismissal of Beigbeder, 71-73; meeting with Hitler, 94-95; meetings with Mussolini, Pétain, 104; pro-Axis speeches, 112-14, 285; and the Embassy riot, 116; and the Blue Division, 139, 140; the dismissal of Suñer, 140-42, 164 *et seq.*; meeting with Salazar, 141; and the Falange, 141-42, 185, 221; and "Torch," 177-79; and the death of Jordana, 272-73; letter to Churchill, 283, 300-304; reply to, 283, 304; and Russia, 283, 300 *et seq.*; régime assessed, 285-93; possible opposition to, 289-93; correspondence and talks with Axis leaders, 309-15.
- Gascoigne, Major, 82, 206.
- Germany, influence in Spain, 30, 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 41, 60-61, 127-28; propaganda, 32, 33, 41, 54-55, 102 *et seq.*, 134-36, 188; espionage by, 65, 66, 100, 199, 252, 254, 265, 267-68; African ambitions, 93-95; peace offensive, 104 *et seq.*; sabotage by, 100, 199, 252-53, 268; submarines and supply ships, 197-98, 206, 252, 313; air crews in Spain, 198-99; exchange of wounded, 242-43; purchases of wolfram, 257 *et seq.*; troops withdrawn from Spanish frontier, 277.
- Gibraltar, strategic importance of, 16, 27; Spanish ambitions concerning, 21, 25, 30, 41, 48-49, 68, 93-95, 136, 172, 308 *et seq.*; defences of, 93, 157-60; and "Torch," 160-61, 162, 163-64, 172, 176; Straits of, Axis activities in, 160, 163, 174, 181, 199, 217.
- Giraud, General, escape to Africa, 180-81.
- Giron, José, 165, 181, 217-18, 273.
- Gomez-Beare, Commander, 211.
- Gort, Lord, Gibraltar defence construction, 158-59.
- Grandi, Count, 214, 215.
- Greece, campaign in, 95, 104, 108.
- Halifax, Lord, 61; on the Mission, 14; letters to, 29-31, 32-40, 42-43, 67-71.
- Hankey, Lord, letters to, 40-41.
- Hargest, Brigadier James, 232.
- Heberlein, Count and Countess, 269.
- Henson, Monsignor, 149.
- Hilgarth, Captain, 132-33.
- Himmler, Heinrich, 76, 146-47.
- Hitler, Adolf, 77, 81, 138; on Beigbeder, 71; meeting with Franco, 94-95; prestige of, 188; plots against, 275-76; correspondence with Franco, 311 *et seq.*
- Hoare, Lady, 16, 18, 39, 126, 167, 227, 236.
- Hoare, Sir Samuel, character and career, 9-14; the Mission proposed, 14-16; preparations, 16-18; journey to Spain, 18-19; arrival, 21-22; interviews with Franco, 25, 45-48, 116, 173-74, 221-22, 249-56, 284; correspondence, with Lord Halifax, 29-31, 32-40, 42-43, 67-71, 84-85, 86, 90; with Lord Beaverbrook, 31, 36, 41-42, 87; with Neville Chamberlain, 31, 38-40; with Duff Cooper, 32; with Churchill, 35, 38, 85, 100-101, 182; with R. A. Butler, 35; with Lord Hankey, 40-41; relations with Beigbeder, 50 *et seq.*, 66 *et seq.*; interviews with Suñer, 57-58, 80-81, 116; economic negotiations, 61-64, 97-100, 113, 173, 247, 264; negotiations with France, 83-91; letter from Lord Lothian, 97-98; discussions with Donovan, 107-10; consultations in London, 118-123, 162-64, 239, 266-67; impressions of Salazar and Masaryk, 124-25; attacked by *Das Reich*, 128-29; tour of Spain, 143 *et seq.*; on Suñer, 166-71; relations with Jordana, 175, 176 *et seq.*, 269-72; correspondence with Jordana, 185-194; the Grand Remonstrance presented, 197-204; attacked by *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 204-205; the Italian surrender negotiations, 209 *et seq.*; the May Agreement, 263-64; in France, 277-81; departure from Spain, 284; assessment of Franco, 285-93; on Spanish character and future, 294 *et seq.*
- Hohenlohe, Prince Max, 105.
- Holland, Captain, 84, 126.
- Italy, influence in Spain, 30, 33, 35, 42; African ambitions, 51-52, 94, 104; Spanish ridicule of, 95, 209-10; submarines and supply ships, 197-98, 206, 252-54; air crews in Spain, 198-99;

- activities in Ceuta, 199; surrender negotiations, 209 *et seq*; sabotage in Spain, 252-54; detention of shipping by Spain, 263, 265-66, 315.
- Japan, and the Burma Road, 26; Minister in Madrid, 127; Military Attaché in Tangier, 263.
- Jerez, 156.
- Jordana, Count, 56; return to office, 164; personal relations with, 175, 176 *et seq*, 269-70; memoranda exchanged, 185-94; on the communist peril, 190-92; and the Azores, 241; and the May Agreement, 268-69; death of, 269-70, 272; policy of, 270-72, 273.
- Kindelán, General, 145-46, 205.
- Klüge, General von, 275-76.
- Las Torres, Baron de, 115, 221.
- Laurel incident, 241, 260.
- Laval, Pierre, 88, 89, 90.
- Lazar, and the Spanish Press, 54-55, 102 *et seq*, 110, 204, 205, 243, 275.
- Lequerica, Felix de, intermediary in French surrender, 83, 92; appointed Foreign Minister, 273-74.
- Liddell, Sir Clive, 93, 157, 158, 159.
- Lothian, Lord, 105; correspondence, 97-98.
- Luna, José, 165.
- MacFarlane, General Mason, 157-58, 159.
- Madrid, conditions in, 22, 30-31, 33, 35, 83; Bible Society in, 244-45; *see also* British Embassy.
- Malley, Bernard, 133-34, 151, 152.
- Malta, strategic importance of, 27.
- Marshall, General George, 172.
- Masaryk, President, 124.
- Massey, Vincent, 235.
- Maund, Captain, 126.
- Mediterranean, naval command of, 27, 75.
- Miles, General, 232.
- Miranda del Ebro, p.o.w. camp at, 231, 232-33.
- Moltke, von, 196, 204, 213, 218.
- Montserrat, Abbey of, 146.
- Morocco, 81, 86, 93, 96; Spanish ambitions in, 30, 37, 68; and Italy, 51-52; French trade with, 89.
- Moscardo, General, 243.
- Muñoz, Domínguez, 165.
- Muñoz-Grandes, General, 220.
- Mussolini, Benito, 11; declaration of war, 26, 27, 41, 42, 51, 92; influence with Franco, 34; meeting with Franco, 104; dismissal of, 211, 214, 215, 218; correspondence with Franco, 309 *et seq*.
- Navarre, 150-53.
- Negrin, Dr., 172.
- North, Admiral, 84.
- Oran action, Spanish reactions to, 40, 84-85.
- Orgaz, General, 145, 206.
- Osborne, Sir D'Arcy, 212.
- Oullet, Friar, 235.
- Paderewski, Jan Ignace, 238.
- Pampeluna, 150-53.
- Pardo, Palace of the, 46-47.
- Pearl Harbour, 126-27.
- Pereira, Theotonio, 45, 58.
- Pérez, Blas, 217-18, 273.
- Pétain, Marshal, 26, 40, 83, 87, 88; policy of collaboration, 90; meeting with Franco, 104.
- Phillips, Admiral Tom, consultation with, 15-16, 27, 61; death of, 127.
- Piéri, M., 90.
- Portal, Air Marshal Sir Charles, 120.
- Portugal, compared with Spain, 19; alliance with Britain, 69; Agreement with Spain, 58-59, 63; relations with Spain, 124, 169; tripartite agreement, 239.
- Pound, Admiral Sir Dudley, 119-20.
- Prince of Wales*, 15, 127.
- Prior, Commander Redvers, 231.
- Rees, Hugh Ellis, 133, 259, 266.
- Repulse*, 127.
- Ribbentrop, Joachim von, 56.
- Rodezno, Count, 152.
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., appeal to Pétain, 90; interest in Spain and Africa, 97-98, 106 *et seq*; letter of assurance to Franco, 178-79.
- Roumania, adherence to Axis, 26, 76, 276.
- Russia, 112; the Spanish view, 190-92, 221, 283, 300 *et seq*; the British view, 188-89, 193-95, 306.
- Salazar, Oliveira, 58, 59, 107, 169; conferences with, 124-25; meeting with Franco, 141.
- San Sebastian, German parades in, 43, 53.
- Segura, Cardinal, 154-56, 290.
- Selby, Sir Walford, 19.
- Seville, 154-56.
- Smith, General Walter, 215.
- Somerville, Admiral, 84, 126.
- Spain, Press, 18, 32, 33, 41, 42-43, 50, 52, 54-56, 61, 68, 104, 112, 202, 286; Falange party, 21-22, 43, 56, 79-81, 121-22, 127, 135, 141-42, 144-45, 153, 155-56, 165, 179-80, 196, 202, 221, 223-24, 246, 286;

- anti-British demonstrations, 21, 39, 61, 114 *et seq*; police, 22, 116, 134, 156, 268-69, 286; evacuation of British subjects, 23-24, 29; belief in Axis victory, 25, 31, 65, 217; British propaganda, 29, 32, 39, 68, 70, 125, 134-35, 201-202; food shortage, 30, 35, 37, 41, 48, 96; administration, 33, 40, 50, 78-79, 100-101, 174, 206, 217, 271, 296 *et seq*; British trade negotiations with, 29, 43, 62-64, 81, 96, 98-100, 113, 173, 247, 264; economic needs of, 48, 96, 173, 174, 247; declaration of non-belligerency, 37, 48; anti-war feeling, 34-35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 61, 181, 286; monarchists, 35, 152, 292-93; Germans at frontier of, 38; armed forces of, 39, 65; *see also* Blue Division; Gobernacion ministry, 45, 52, 57; relations with Portugal, 58-59, 124, 141, 169; national character, 62-63, 117, 207, 262, 272, 296; xenophobia, 69, 100, 108, 119, 137; Allied prisoners of war in, 77-79, 226-36; persecution of British subjects, 50, 77, 79-81, 128, 145, 200, 201, 202, 223-25; ridicule of Italy, 95, 209-11; oil supplies to, 96-97, 261; corruption of officials, 100, 174, 206, 271; reactions to Russian invasion, 112; Labour Levy, 139-40; unneutral acts protest, 197-204; refugees in, 236-38; exchange of wounded in, 242-43; sale of wolfram, 247, 250, 257 *et seq*; Italian shipping interned, 263, 265-66, 315; terms of May Agreement, 263-64; Churchill on, 267; German withdrawal from frontier, 277; Franco régime assessed, 285-93; the church, 289-91; republicans, 292; literature, 294-95; government memoranda to Axis, 307-315; Axis activities in, *see* Germany, Italy; territorial aspirations, *see* Africa, Gibraltar, Tangier.
- Stohrer, Baron von, 22, 44-45, 46, 67-68, 183.
- Suñer, Ramon Serrano, 125, 127, 135; belief in Axis victory, 42; control of press, 52, 55; character and career, 56, 166-71; political views, 56-57; conflict with Beigbeder, 55-59, 168-69; Beigbeder on, 67-71; on Beigbeder dismissal, activities in Ceuta, 199; surrender 71; offices held, 75, 76, 112; inaccessibility of, 76-77, 79, 170; foreign policy, 81-82, 111-12; hostile attitude, 96, 103-104; dislike of America, 106, 110; and the Embassy riot, 116; at zenith of power, 138-39; eclipsed by Franco, 141-42; dismissal, 164 *et seq*; conversation with Hitler, 310-11.
- Tangier, 30; Spanish occupation of, 50, 51-52, 77, 81-82, 93, 103, 200; Axis activities in, 163, 200, 203, 205-206, 217, 255, 263, 265.
- Templewood, *see* Hoare.
- "Torch," conception of, 119, 121, 130, 138; British propaganda concerning, 162-64, 172 *et seq*; Spanish reactions to, 163, 172, 177-79, 180, 182; assurances about, 177-79.
- Torr, Brigadier W. W. T., 22, 132, 219, 224, 227, 276, 277, 279.
- Torre Soto, Marqués de, 156-57.
- Valladolid, English college at, 148-49.
- Varela, General, attempted assassination of, 165, 224.
- Vatican City, relations with Spain, 77, 146, 169-70.
- Veglison, Correa, 144-45.
- Velayos, Count, 177.
- Veragua, Duke of, 74.
- Vichy government, *see* France.
- Victor Emmanuel, King, 211-12.
- Vigo, 147.
- Vigon, General Juan, 65, 196, 219.
- Villafranca, fair at, 243-44.
- Weddell, Alexander, 23, 45; and Suñer, 106, 170.
- Weygand, General, 89.
- Williams, Guy, 156.
- Williams, Harold, 133.
- Winzer, Gestapo chief, 268.
- Wolfram, purchases of, 247, 250, 256, 257 *et seq*.
- Wood, Sir Kingsley, 11-12.
- Yencken, Arthur, 21, 34, 42, 82, 131-32, 135, 259, 266-67.
- Zanucci, General, 215-16.

327.42 H634A

DATE OF ISSUE

This book must be returned
within 3, 7, 14 days of its issue. A
fine of ONE ANNA per day will
be charged if the book is overdue.

--	--

